VOLUME VII NUMBER 2

The Mennonite Quarterly Review

APRIL 1933

EDITORIAL

About the same time that the first Mennonites were settling in America at Germantown, Mennonites of North German and Dutch extraction, a serious divisive movement among the Swiss-South German Mennonites was leading to a complete schism of the followers of Jacob Ammann from the majority of the Mennonites in Switzerland and the Palatinate. The two hundred and forty years which have elapsed since the beginning of the Amish movement have seen the distinction between Amish and Mennonites all but wiped out in Europe. It has remained for American Mennonitism to perpetuate the Amish schism in almost its pure original form. True, even in America the greater portion of the Amish Mennonites has been merged into the general stream of Mennonitism again, but a strong wing of the Amish movement has successfully resisted to this day all the influences which have played upon it and which would have been sufficient in the case of most small social groups to break down the wall of partition which separates them from the broader stream of life in their allied environment. One of the tasks of the historian of American Mennonitism and of the interpreter of American Mennonite life, is to properly understand and sympathetically interpret this group and its culture, commonly known as the "Old Order Amish."

There are close to ten thousand baptized members of the Old Order Amish in America, which certainly means nearly twenty-five thousand souls. They live in numerous geographically compact and socially airtight communities scattered throughout Pennsylvania, Ohio, Indiana, Illinois, Iowa, and Kansas, and in a few other

states in smaller numbers. Their religious life, social customs, ecclesiastical organization and procedure, and intellectual outlook is predominantly tradition-bound, and the general body of tradition which does the binding goes back to Swiss and Alsatian backgrounds of two to three hundred years ago. Here and there an Amish community has gradually broken away from its traditional moorings, as a large number of the Amish communities did as early as seventy-five years ago. Here and there fragments of Amish groups have also broken away from the main bodies of the congregations. Occasionally communities have disintegrated altogether.

For the most part the attention paid to our Amish brethren in current literature, even of a serious type, has been of the sort which is attracted primarily by the peculiar, the unconventional, the bizarre. The Amish have frequently been examined and exhibited as exotic specimens in the zoo of the sects, they have been painted in strong colors as a picturesque survival, they have been held up to inspection as a case of social group paralysis, but seldom have they been treated simply as human beings, deserving sympathetic interpretation. Seldom even have the actual facts of their life and customs, their religious beliefs and practices, been faithfully recorded for the unacquainted reader. It is time that descriptive and historical writing of this type concerning the Amish should be produced.

We are glad to present in this and the next number of the REVIEW, therefore, what we believe is a valuable contribution to the descriptive literature and history of the Amish from the pen of one of the members of the editorial staff of the REVIEW, Professor John Umble. Professor Umble has chosen the Amish community in Union County, Pennsylvania for his case-study, a community which has completely disintegrated in the course of the years. In the first portion of the article which appears in this issue, the social and religious life of the community is described. The actual history of the community will follow in the next issue. Readers will appreciate the sympathetic and wholesome attitude of the author as he presents his picture in strong, clear lines. He has succeeded in a task which is not so easy, namely that of sympathetic and kindly observation and analysis of a distinctly "peculiar" group, without the distasteful and irritating condescension which so often mars work of this type. He presents to us the Amishman of sixty and seventy years ago (really not far removed from the Amishman of to-day) just as he is, plainly and straightforwardly, with equal impartiality to what we who differ might consider virtues or faults. The article should contribute to a clearing away of many false con-

ceptions of the Amish and to the building up of a sympathetic understanding and appreciation for the many virtues of this distinct and strong though socially "offside" group. Professor Umble was born into a family which was an integral part of the Union County Amish community, and has gathered his material primarily from the observation and experience of relatives and friends who were members of the group, many of whom are still living.

As the second major article in this issue, we present the completion of John Horsch's extensive, thorough, and challenging discussion of Dr. Kuehler's recent history of early Dutch Anabaptism. For a statement of the general point of view of the author and the editors in regard to this discussion we refer to the editorial comment and the introduction which accompanied the first instalment of the article in the last issue of the Review. Unless positive and well-documented evidence can be adduced to support the theses of Dr. Kuehler which John Horsch has called into question, we believe that the reader must come to the conclusion on the basis of the present state of the evidence that the theses must be rejected as unproved. As matters at present stand there is a fundamental clash on numerous major points. Dr. Kuehler's book amounts to a fundamental revision of certain aspects of early Dutch Anabaptist history as this history has been previously understood by most historians. It has been Horsch's service to call attention to this fact and to successfully challenge this revision.

There will eternally not be found any other remedy for our sins, neither in heaven nor on earth, neither works nor merits nor sacraments, even though they are used, according to Scripture, nor enduring persecution and tribulation, nor the innocent blood of the martyred saints, neither angels nor men nor any other remedy, but only the c r i m s o n, immaculate blood of Christ, the sacrificial lamb, which was out of pure grace, and love, shed for the remission of our sins.

Menno Simons, 1556.

Quoted by John Horsch in this issue.

THE AMISH MENNONITES OF UNION COUNTY, PENNSYLVANIA

JOHN UMBLE

I. SOCIAL AND RELIGIOUS LIFE

In Union county, Pennsylvania, on the west side of the Susquehanna and about forty-five miles north of Harrisburg, Samuel Lantz of Leacock township, Lancaster county, and his sons-in-law founded an Amish settlement about 1837. The settlement is particularly interesting because even so late as 1880, it still had many of the characteristics of an Old Order Amish community although its bishop had been from the beginning of the Amish conference movement in 1862 associated with the more progressive group of Amish Mennonite leaders in Pennsylvania, Ohio, Indiana, and Illinois. During the decade from 1870 to 1880 the organization, method of discipline, and community life seem to have differed but little from that of many of the more advanced Old Order Amish congregations at the present time. The wide diversity of opinion in the congregation on rules of discipline is indicated by the division of the leaders about 1880. When Preacher Christian King and Bishop-Deacon Michael Swartz moved from Union County to Lancaster county soon after 1880, they allied themselves with the most conservative group of Amish in that county. The bishop of the Union county congregation, Elias Riehl, after being silenced and ex-communicated in 1880, allied himself with the Mennonite congregation in Juniata county. Two of the ministers, Andrew Miller and David Stoltzfus, with a large part of the congregation moved to Hartford, Kansas, in a body a few years later and became a moderately progressive Amish Mennonite community under the bishop oversight of Joseph Schlegel of Nebraska. Several families who had remained in Union county when the Kansas emigrants left, moved to Lancaster county during the next decade to unite with Old Order Amish congregations.

It is necessary to keep in mind the independent nature of Amish, and also Amish Mennonite, individual congregations. Like congregations of other denominations of the Baptist type they were always entirely separate and independent in the early days. For this reason it is important to discriminate between what was general and universal practice among the Amish and Amish Men-

nonites and what was local and specific as regards Union county. It is the purpose of this article to present the religious, economic, and sociological background of the Union county Amish Mennonite congregation. Their customs resembled those of other Amish and Amish Mennonite congregations in Ohio, Indiana, and Iowa, in general, but differed slightly in certain social practices and church regulations.

For instance, Deacon Christian Stoltzfus of Union county considered it obligatory for a Christian to vote for president of the United States, but he never took part in other elections. In Wayne county, Ohio, Amish Mennonite church members were not allowed to be candidates for office and voting was discouraged. In Holmes county, Ohio, on the other hand, many school board members were, and still are, Amish Mennonites. Nor was it at all unusual for a county commissioner or township trustee in Holmes county to be an Amish Mennonite. For many decades some of the Amish congregations that sprang up on the western frontier were slightly more liberal in their manners and customs than the older settlements in the East. Early in the eighties, the congregation of Bishop John Warye at West Liberty, Ohio, had relaxed somewhat in matters of dress. Men wore buttons on their clothes instead of the hooks and eyes required in Pennsylvania. A certain young man from Warye's congregation went to Pennsylvania to marry a young woman of a Lancaster county Amish Mennonite congregation. In accord with the demands of those times the bridegroom-to-be brought with him a letter signed by Bishop Warye stating that he was a member in good standing in Warye's congregation. Since buttons could not be worn by members in good standing in the Lancaster county congregation, an embarrassing situation arose. After much discussion and a threatened rupture among the ministry the young man consented to borrow a hook-and-eye coat to be worn for the wedding ceremony. He put on the coat, went to the services, was married in the borrowed coat, and immediately after services resumed his button coat. The young man is now a bishop in the Mennonite church.

An equally illuminating incident occurred a few years earlier. A Union county young man wished to send his photograph to the daughter of an Amish Mennonite bishop at West Liberty, Ohio. Not wishing to appear too old-fashioned to the young woman whom he wished to impress with his photograph, he borrowed a button coat when he sat for the picture. The photograph, still preserved, shows that the borrowed coat was several sizes too small,

but it seems to have had the desired effect. In less than a year the young people were married. He too is still an active bishop in the Mennonite church.

Other examples of the difference in customs and church rules between East and West could be cited. Sleighbells were not permitted in parts of Pennsylvania. There was no rule against their use among Amish Mennonites in Logan and Champaign counties, Ohio, after 1880.

The organization of the Union county congregation, typically Amish, was that of a self-perpetuating congregational society, completely independent except that it sometimes called in a committee of bishops to assist in dealing with extraordinary cases of discipline and in electing and ordaining ministers. The presiding officer of the congregation was the "Voelliger Diener," the "minister with full powers." He alone had authority to perform such rites as baptism, communion, and marriage or to discipline members of the congregation. The title "Bishop," used in this article to designate the "Voelliger Diener" or the minister with complete authority, did not come into general use among Amish Mennonites until late in the nineteenth century. Next in rank to the Voelliger Diener was the "Diener zum Buch," the "Minister to the Book." He was authorized to preach and exhort. He assumed charge of the regular worship service in the absence of the "Voelliger Diener," but he could perform none of the rites of the church. Next in rank was the "Armendiener," "Minister of the poor," now called deacon. It was his duty to provide a place for holding the Sunday service, to administer the poor fund, to arbitrate difficulties between members of the congregation, and to initiate proceedings against violators of the rules and discipline.

Another officer, whose duties were not so clearly defined and varied somewhat in different congregations, was the "Voelliger Armendiener." He was in reality, as his name implies, an "Armendiener" ordained to perform the duties of a "Voelliger Diener" in that officer's absence. His election came about on this wise. When the bishop's office became vacant and a "Voelliger Diener" was to be elected, it was customary to include all the properly qualified "Diener" and the "Armendiener" in the lot. If the lot fell on the latter, he was ordained "Voelliger Armendiener." The arrangement was often quite unsatisfactory. If the ministers were older and more gifted, the newly ordained "Voelliger Armendiener" might find himself quite without authority or influence beyond his office as "Armendiener." He was without real authority to

preach and without such authority he could not even open a church service without being asked to do so by a minister or in the absence of the ministers. Some of the foremost leaders of the Amish Mennonite Church, however, were "Voellige Armendiener" who, by their tact and eloquence, made a large place for themselves in the counsels and work of the Church. Such were Samuel Yoder of Mifflin county, Pennsylvania; John P. King of Logan county, Ohio; Eli Miller of Elkhart county, Indiana; Frederick Swartzendruber of Johnson county, Iowa, and others.

In the Union county, Pennsylvania, Amish congregation, in 1879, the "Voelliger Diener" was Elias Riehl; the "Diener zum Buch," Christian King and Andrew Miller; the "Armendiener," Christian Stoltzfus; and the "Voelliger-Armendiener," Michael Schwartz. Most of these were related by marriage: Riehl and Stoltzfus had married sisters, the daughters of Samuel Lantz, the pioneer. Schwartz was the husband of Barbara Stoltzfus, a relative of Christian Stoltzfus, and Schwartz' son Jacob had married Stoltzfus' daughter Magdalene; King was the husband of Stoltzfus' daughter Maria; Miller had married one of Riehl's younger sisters. Schwartz was without real authority. He had moved into the community after Stoltzfus was ordained deacon and Riehl, bishop. He was sometimes invited to preach but his gifts were not sufficiently outstanding to bring him into prominence. Yet his official position gave him an excuse for assuming a critical attitude toward the young people and others whose conduct or attitude he wished to censure.

The Union county congregation never erected a meeting house. The deacon arranged with some family to "take the meeting" and announced the place of meeting two weeks in advance. The size of the barns and houses in this and other communities is to be explained, in part at least, by the necessity of providing room for the meeting and stable room for the horses. Only two families in the Union county congregation lived in houses too small to accommodate the meeting. The week she entertained the meeting was a busy one for the housewife. The whole house was cleaned and scrubbed and put to rights. The large out-door Dutch oven was fragrant with the twenty to thirty immense round loaves of home-made bread and scores of nicely browned half-moon dried apple pies. Benches must be provided. In one part of the settlement the deacon's enterprise had provided a set of benches used by himself and his sons and daughters, chiefly for church purposes. At the other end of the settlement the boys set out with a team and

wagon on Saturday before meeting to borrow all the available household benches for use in the services. Since families were large and benches did week-day service for dining room chairs and for many other purposes, it was not difficult to gather a sufficient number among the neighbors to seat an entire congregation.

The elaborate preparation made for entertaining the meeting is indicated by a young woman's diary for 1875. In that year the meeting assembled at her home on April 11 and September 12. A part of the activity prior to April 11 may be due to the spring house-cleaning, but it seems to have been a trifle early for that annual upheaval because, according to the diary, a foot of snow fell on April 13. Extracts from the diary show the thorough preparation made for meeting. Not a speck of dust or a trace of housewifely carelessness must remain, not even in remote corners that no visitor would investigate. "Whitewashed our sleeping room and the porch upstairs and cleaned the garret." "Scrubbed the whole house from the garret to the cellar." "Blacked the coal stove and cleaned some yard." "Ammon Reedy cleaned the clocks." "Binding carpet this A. M." "Cleaned the front yard. Cut paper for the corner cupboard." "Mother was up to help to white wash the [living] room and the kitchen. Cleaned some yard." "Cleaned and scoured the tin ware and iron ware, [milk(?)] crocks and crock lids and the tubs." "Whitewashed pale fence this A. M." "Cleaned the back porch, whitewashed it and washed it off." "Whitewashed fence after supper, snitzed apples for pie, and made yeast." "Baked thirteen loaves of bread and forty-four pies." "Took the carpet out of the room and put the benches in." "Churned butter and cooked red beets." "Blackened the kitchen stove. Swept the cellar. Scrubbed the kitchen and the back porch." In addition there is a full page for Saturday, dealing with final preparations and ending with, "Got the dishes ready for preaching."

The entry for the Monday following includes, "Put the dishes away. Arranged the corner cupboard. Dusted the chairs. Put the benches away. Tidied up the room. Laid the carpet. Sewed it together and tacked it down."

When Sunday morning arrived the plain square carriages covered with brownish yellow oil-cloth conveyed the members and their families to meeting. The yellow oil-cloth was home-made. Strips of muslin were tacked on the side of the barn, painted and allowed to dry and then used for covers for a vehicle top. The carriage had no windows and could be entered only from the front. To mount the vehicle one used a step depending from the shafts

in front of the fore wheel. Next one placed a foot on the singletree and finally stepped into the carriage. Access to the rear seat was gained by pulling forward the back rest of the fore seat and stepping over it into the rear part of the carriage. Dashboard and whip socket were prohibited by a standing rule of the congregation. No windows or any other worldly decoration or convenience were permitted. Paint was of one solid color.

In the case of windows one exception was made. Samuel Kennel, carpenter and cabinet maker, was coffin-maker for the congregation and used his carriage as a hearse. On one occasion he preceded the funeral procession as usual and did not learn that an accident to one of the carriages had stopped all of the other vehicles until he was a half mile or more in advance. To prevent a recurrence of this embarrassing situation he inserted a very small pane of window glass in the rear of his carriage. Self-appointed guardians of the purity of the church at once brought the matter before the congregation. But the ministers agreed, and the congregation voted, to allow this exception to be made for the reason stated.

When the yellow carriages arrived at the place of meeting on Sunday morning, friendly greetings were exchanged on every hand. Eager young hostlers assumed charge of the conveyances, unhitched the horses and ranged them in the spacious stables, carefully placing fence rails or poles between the animals so that they would not kick or otherwise molest each other. The hostlers, usually five or six in number, were boys and young men of Amish families, who had not yet united with the church. In the afternoon or evening when the members were ready to return home, all that was necessary was to make it known to the hostlers who brought out the teams and hitched them to the carriages. They also fed and watered the horses at the noon hour.

While the late comers were arriving, some of the men and boys stood outside and visited for a time. The more pious and reverent found seats within at once, the men and boys in one room, the women and girls in another, ranged on benches of various heights and lengths, but all without back rests of any kind. At the proper time, but not before one of the ministers had arrived, some lay member announced a hymn from the *Ausbund,* always referred to as "Das dicke Liederbuch." To elect or appoint a regular chorister or to have him rise to lead a hymn would smack too much of the practices of the "worldly" churches. From anywhere in the room, therefore, some self-appointed chorister would announce the

opening hymn, "O Gott Vater, wir preisen dich." After he had sung several measures, the congregation one by one would join in the hymn. The tune was usually pitched too high and many of the melodies were in a minor strain, a melancholy wail of distress, reminiscent of the days of bitter persecution in Europe. When the chorister reached the end of a stanza, he sang the first note of the next while the congregation prolonged the last note of the other for many seconds.

Meanwhile the ministers retired to an upstairs room for counsel, for the "Abrath" (pronounced oprote). Here various matters were discussed and the order of services decided upon for the day. If the ministers appeared downstairs before the conclusion of the long first hymn, services began at once; if not, a second hymn would be announced by the same or another lay member and the singing continued until the ministers appeared.

The service proper began with the reading by a minister, a "Diener," of an entire chapter accompanied by running comment, often the equivalent of a fairly long sermon. At the conclusion of this reading came the period of silent prayer during which every member knelt, facing about and resting his elbows on the bench that had served him for a seat. Another hymn followed this period of prayer. Then came the sermon. In Union county none but "Voelliger Diener" Elias Riehl had had any but the barest rudiments of education. The sermons were well-meant, but, except Riehl's, were long, dry and uninspiring. Survivors of the congregation recall that the efforts of "Diener" Christian King too often wandered into a tirade against worldliness, dealing largely with externals, and that "Diener" Andrew Miller, pious, beloved soul though he was, rarely got beyond the repetition of his two sermons: "Lazarus in Abraham's Bosom" and "The Foolish Virgins." Both King and Miller read all their public prayers from the German prayer book.

After the sermon, followed an audible prayer by the minister who had preached the sermon, the audience kneeling as before. Bishop Elias Riehl did not use the prayer book. As he knelt in prayer, eyes closed, head thrown back, body swaying and rocking, he poured forth impromptu floods of eloquence of great power and beauty as he implored the divine favor on his congregation.

At the conclusion of the prayer the minister who had delivered the sermon stated, after confessing that he had spoken in weakness, that he would "give further liberty." All the ministers from the "Voelliger Diener" down to the youngest "Armendiener" then

gave witness or testimony ("Zeugniss") to the truth of the sermon.* In its briefest form such a testimony consisted of the statement that the speaker could say "Yea and amen" to the truth presented, so far as he had understood it, and that he extended "further liberty." But the one testifying might extend his remarks to a review of the sermon or he might even wander off into a small-sized sermon of his own on quite another topic. The bishop frequently called on lay members (men) of the congregation to give testimony to the sermon. They might ask to be excused, and some did so, but Samuel Kennel, Joel Riehl, and others, developed a certain measure of fluency in this type of informal exhortation.

There were occasions to be sure when a testimony was by no means confined to "yea and amen." An incident is related of "Armendiener" Christian Stoltzfus which illustrates dissent from a sermon and also Stoltzfus' conception of his duty as a deacon in maintaining peace and unity within the congregation. Stoltzfus' son-in-law, "Diener" Christian King, preached the sermon on this particular Sunday. It was during the troubled time when "Voelliger Diener" Riehl was accused of shielding his sons who, as some thought, had disturbed the fellowship of the congregation. In the course of King's remarks, he became quite personal even stating that a "Voelliger Diener" should be "straight," and that he should be entirely impartial even though it should necessitate disciplining his own children. Bishop Riehl kept glancing up at him, edging away to the end of the bench, and shaking his head. King looked down at him and exclaimed, "Ja, du schuettelst den Kopf, avver du kannst's net verleugnen." When Stoltzfus arose to give testimony to his son-in-law's sermon, he mildly stated that one should exercise great care in judging the motives of another. Stoltzfus' testimonies are remembered, however, not only for their mild, peaceful tone, but also for their length. One former resident of Union county recalls that "Christley generally used all of his share of the time, and then some."

It is only fair to say in this connection that in spite of the mournful hymn tunes, the long prayers and sermons and the almost interminable testimonies, there was much practical Christian teach-

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* Although elected by the congregation, chosen of God through the lot, and ordained by duly qualified officials of the church, no special sanctity attached to the person, office, or words of the bishop, minister, or deacon. He was fallible; his interpretation of the Scripture might be faulty. Hence the vital importance of having his message reviewed and examined lest the congregation be led to accept error for truth. The words of Scripture alone were "Yea and Amen."

ing, practical piety, business honesty, and social purity among these Amish. It should be added, too, that the worship was not so different from that of some other denominations during the nineteenth century, when short prayers and sermons were practically unknown and spirited hymn tunes had not come into general favor.

After the last long testimony was over, the deacon arose to announce where meeting would be held in two weeks. A closing hymn dismissed the congregation, and the service closed without either doxology or benediction.

Even before the last long-drawn-out note of the hymn had died away, another variety of activity had sprung to life in the kitchen. Preparations for lunch were going forward. Bread and pies were being cut, butter brought from the spring house, beets and pickles placed in dishes. The odor of strong black coffee floated into the rooms where the congregation was seated. Long before the end of the church service the younger children had been served a lunch of miniature dried apple pies and had gone to the yard or barn to play if the service was especially long.

As soon as the last hymn was ended, the women of the congregation, with active feet and nimble fingers, converted into a dining room the rooms where worship had been held. Long narrow tables received the generous slices of home-made bread and mountains of half moon pies. The round loaves of home-made bread were often twelve or fourteen inches in diameter and more than a foot high. Home-made cheese was served sometimes but meat of all kinds was lacking. All the food was cold but the coffee was served hot. First to eat were the older men, sitting up to the table on the benches that had done service as pews. A half dozen girls poured water and coffee and replenished the food supply as prodigious quantities of bread and butter and apple butter, pickled beets and cucumbers, and half-moon dried apple pies vanished. Groups of hungry children hung about the doors and looked longingly in. After the men at the first table were satisfied, the table was cleared quickly and reset for another group. Sometimes, what with the prolonged service and table after table of hungry lunchers, it would be nearly three o'clock before the last group of famished boys found room at the table. Then food disappeared in good earnest, but the supply was adequate.

As soon as the men in the first group left the table, they went outside to lounge in the shade. There they smoked and chatted. Smoking was well-nigh universal among men and boys. Every one

raised tobacco for his own use and some for sale also. Few of the men smoked a pipe. Every one manufactured his own cigars.*

In the house meanwhile the women and girls washed dishes, chatted, and took care of the babies of which the congregation had its full quota.

About three o'clock the families who had come the greatest distance prepared to leave and called for their conveyances. The hostlers sprang to bring the horse and carriage to the gate. Many of the members, however, remained for supper. The evening meal was served in the same way as the noon meal and consisted of the same articles of diet. The last of the older people left for home soon after supper, but the young folks sometimes remained for a "singing" in the evening. The singing seems not to have followed services at the home of Deacon Christian Stoltzfus, however.

At the singing the long table and the benches did service once more. Each young swain chose a fair partner to sit beside him at the table during the singing. A former Union county resident, now a gray-haired grandfather, still recalls with pleasure the greatest evening of his early youth when he and his cousin heroically summoned up enough courage to ask a beautiful, auburn-haired granddaughter of Deacon Christian Stoltzfus and her sister to allow them to be their partners at the singing and were accepted. In the later years the young people seem to have used the *Allgemeine Lieder-Sammlung* for the singing. They did not sing four-part tunes. Every one sang the melody.

After they sang informally for some time with all the couples seated about the table, the singing proper broke up and became a play party. Until nearly midnight they played folk games that resembled the square dances of an earlier period. Several seem to have resembled the Virginia reel. In summer or when an unusually large crowd was present as at a wedding, the party might be held in the barn floor especially swept for the occasion. Tallow candle lanterns were hung up to light the floor. All the tunes were sung; no instrumental music was used. A popular favorite was, "I am a poor young soldier." Most of the lines were in English. This may indicate that the play party was not brought to America from the homeland but had been adopted by the Amish from their English and Irish neighbors. It must be remembered that although a great deal of freedom seems manifest in the life of Union county Amish

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* Smoking is now frowned upon in most Mennonite circles, but many Amish still smoke.

young people, tradition insists that, on the main, it was wholesome.*

Sunday services with the attendant social exercises were held every two weeks. The intervening Sunday was spent in visiting. Sabbath observance does not seem to have been quite so strict among the Amish in Union county as it was among the German Evangelicals in the neighborhood. Deacon Christian Stoltzfus seems to have forbidden certain Sunday diversions to his boys more out of deference to the opinion of his neighbors than from any scruples of his own. On Sunday morning, for instance, when his German Evangelical neighbors were passing by his home on their way to the Salem meeting house, the deacon's boys were forbidden to crack hickory nuts because he "did not want to have the Evangelicals hearing any pounding in his workshop on Sunday." The deacon's boys were allowed to fish and gather chestnuts on Sunday provided they did not disturb the Sunday quiet. There is some evidence to show that others in the congregation were stricter than he. A member happening upon one of his son's whistling in the yard on Sunday evening, gave him a sound thrashing. To whistle on Sunday was forbidden not only in most Amish but in many other Christian homes as well.

Although the social activities of the Amish young people as a group were held on Sunday and were tied up in a certain sense with the religious services, they participated also in the general social life of the community. One social custom was the holding of suppers. These were in part commercial. A young man wishing to make a little spending money would secure permission from a neighboring family to hold a social or supper in their home. He would purchase crackers and oysters, or ice-cream and cake, or strawberries, cream and cake, according to the season. The entire country-side would then be notified and the price of admission entitled all comers to eat all they wished. The family entertaining the supper was served free. Deacon Christian Stoltzfus' home was open to these suppers.

The regular bi-weekly Sunday evening singings mentioned above were attended only by the Amish young people. But weekday singings in which all the young people of the community took part were organized in the school houses. Usually the instructor charged a small fee for a twelve weeks' term. In these singing schools many of the Amish young people in Union county learned

*The custom of bundling, if it was ever practiced among Union County Amish, was discontinued before 1860. No living member of the congregation remembers that it was ever allowed in Union county. See the translation of the 1837 Somerset County (Penna.) Amish conference in the next issue of the REVIEW.

the rudiments of music and four-part singing. Some Amish parents refused to allow their young people to attend.

On one occasion when two Union county young men were visiting in Champaign county, Ohio, about 1880, they created a sensation by singing, respectively, tenor and bass. But the first few lines of the hymn were not ended before Bishop John Warye arose, struck the pulpit desk a blow with his hand, and commanded the congregation to stop. After the stern rebuke, "Net Bass singa," the congregation proceeded. The young men were in the wrong, to be sure. They would not have been allowed to sing tenor or bass in the Union county church service, but they had visited a few congregations where four-part singing was permitted and thought, no doubt, that it might pass unnoticed in western Ohio.

The following letter written in 1879 by an eighteen year old member of the Union county congregation sheds further light on the social life and customs of the Union county young people:

"Dear Sisters it is with pleasure I take pen in hand to in form you hw we are getting along we are all alive and kicking although we have nothing to kick at so I dont see the use.
We was to a singing last night at Joe Zooks joe and I and the cook went over in the old bugy and Pete and Eli went in joes new one, we thought it was comeing it prety strong and so we got them on the notion that we were going to stay over, and as the cook wanted to go home right away they had to take the phaeton. (god bless the old rig.) Eli Riehl went for Miss Yoder. We had a regular old tare. We had a race going over and came mighty near upseting. no bones broken.
We are going to have an oyster supper here to morow night joe Riehl is getting it up he is full of buisness just now. he went for Miss Yoder to I spose there will be a fight before long They was all here fore supper last Sunday Eli R. and I was skateing in the afternoon he got himself a new pair of skates. he says he knows a lady that can skate and so he wants to learn, and take her out skateing. We are going to have singing on the hill [schoolhouse] on Friday night and so if you want to tend you had better scratch home. Eli and I was going to Mifflin next week but the cook says if we go she will to (hang her) . . . There is protraced meeting over at the Salem* joe and I was going to go over this eve but it is snowing (and has been all day) that we cant, we was going to get some ligeon Well I gess it is time I stop my scratching for I gess you will get tired reading it before you are through

Colorado or bust
From your brother

* "Salem" here refers to the German-English Evangelical church on the Smoketown road. They conducted a highly emotional service with much shouting and loud praying at the mourner's bench. Some young people attended out of curiosity or to be entertained.

A postscript dated three days later concludes the letter. "A litel more after the supper. the supper was a success our neighbors girls were all here there were 44 here . . . We butchered yesterday and I spose you aint a bit sorry . . . The cook says she is just staying 3 weeks but dont get scared we will get another or batchet"

The reader of this letter would scarcely suspect that its writer wore long hair, not parted, but cut "crock fashion" behind and straight across the forehead in front, that his home-made Sunday coat and vest were fastened with hooks and eyes, that his trousers, also home-made, were cut in "barn-door" or "broad-fall" style, opening at the sides and not in front, and that he wore high leather boots with the uncreased trousers pulled down over them. Yet, that such is the case is proved by his photograph preserved in his sister's photograph album. Sitting for a photograph was forbidden by the rules of the Amish Mennonite conference, but wide latitude was allowed by indulgent parents to young people who were not yet members of the church. The rule was not strictly enforced in Union county after 1875.

The young man's letter suggests another phase of social life —visiting Amish Mennonite communities in other counties. Most of the Amish were farmers, primarily. When the winter supply of feed had been gathered into the barn, the live stock comfortably housed, vegetables and fruit stored in the cellar, the butchering done and the meat "put down," only a small part of the available farm labor was required to "do the chores" and "look after the stock." Hence the younger members of the Union county families took turns doing this necessary work and spending weeks or even months visiting relatives and friends in Mifflin or Lancaster county or in Maryland. The 1875 diary of a nineteen year old young woman in Union county shows that she was visiting relatives, Peacheys and Bylers, in Mifflin county in January, and Kauffmans, Zooks, Kennels, Umbles, Lantzes, Neuhausers and Bylers in Lancaster county in December. The cost of such a trip was very low. An idle team and a bobsled furnished cheap transportation. Hosts and guests exchanged presents, but no one paid for board or lodging. The commodious Amish farm houses were well-stocked with feather beds; cellar, pantry, and smokehouse held plenteous stores of pure, wholesome food. To offer pay would have been considered an insult to the hospitality of the hostess.

Not only did the Union county young folks exchange visits with those of Lancaster and Mifflin, but Union county served as a

meeting place for Lancaster and Mifflin county young people. One winter in the early eighties a three-seated sled drawn by a team of spirited horses left Mifflin for Union carrying, among others, S. E. Allgyer, of West Liberty, Ohio, then a young man scarcely out of his teens. He still recalls with pleasure the excellent entertainment, hospitable homes, and the fine group of sociable young people in Union county. Visitors were delighted with the air of culture and refinement in the home of Joel Riehl. When the group of young people was ready to return to Mifflin, they set out from the Joel Riehl home. Before day, the visitors were seated in the sleigh ready to depart, the entire family and a considerable company of Lancaster county visitors assembled in the yard under the stars twinkling in the frosty air, and sang impressively the old favorite, "I am going round the mountain, don't you weep for me." Then amid hearty good-byes, the tinkling of bells, and the crunching of snow, they were off for the sixty-five mile drive to Mifflin where they arrived late the same evening. These visits naturally resulted in considerable intermarriage between the young people of the three counties.

Weddings were made a time of general rejoicing. A number of former Union county residents still recall the double wedding on December 11, 1879 of the two eldest daughters of Deacon Christian Stoltzfus and his second wife, Lydia Beiler. The wedding was semi-public, the entire congregation assembling as if for church services. Guests were invited, to be sure, but no one of the congregation was overlooked. It was customary at Amish weddings to hold an entire church service with the hymns, prayers, scripture reading and sermon as usual. The banns were published ("ausgerufen") two weeks or more in advance. The sermon was often so embarrassingly personal and the admonitions to the groom so direct that the young woman became a blushing bride in good earnest. The story of Tobit in the apocryphal books was rehearsed in great detail. While church services were held in the usual way, the ordinary plain Sunday dinner gave way to a real wedding feast. The tables literally groaned under the weight of every tempting dish that the industry or cunning of the housewife could devise. Not only was it a day of feasting with an elaborate dinner at noon and a huge supper in the evening, but the feasting continued throughout the night, for after supper the table was set once more and the supply was replenished whenever necessary.

The deacon's younger sons had cleaned and swept the barn floor for the merry-makers. There they played games until far

into the night. Whenever one of them grew tired or hungry, he took his partner to the table in the house. When they had eaten what they wished, they returned to the barn and joined the group of players again.

An unscheduled but a not quite unexpected part of the program was the arrival in early evening of several hundred young people, not members of the Amish congregation, who came "from all over the county," with every conceivable noisemaking device for the "belling." One of the young men is still living whom the deacon commissioned to go down to his cellar to bring up several pails of wine to treat this crowd.* The young men emptied the wine into a wash tub, added a pailful or two of water and stirred in a large quantity of sugar. Then they arranged the entire group in a circle ostensibly to insure missing no one, but actually to prevent drunkenness, and then passed the sweetened diluted wine to the whole company. Some, however, after being served, lost their place in the line to reappear elsewhere for a second and a third drink.**

Funerals, like weddings, were made the occasion for a complete church service. Embalming was unknown. Whenever it was necessary to delay a funeral to await the arrival of friends from a distance, an undertaker who owned an ice-box was employed to preserve the body. Under ordinary circumstances, Samuel Kennel made the coffin and conveyed the body to the cemetery in his family carriage as indicated above (see p. 74). Kennel had cut down a number of large walnut trees and had them sawed into boards which he stored in his workshop. He also kept a dozen or more walnut coffins in stock. The body of the deceased was "laid-out," that is, washed and dressed, by friends of the family. Until the funeral several friends "sat up" with the corpse. The corpse was never alone for a moment from death to burial. At night Union county custom called for young unmarried couples to watch beside the dead. A liberal midnight lunch was set to help them keep awake. On the day of the burial the entire congregation took dinner at the late home of the deceased and it was expected that as large a number as possible should return to the home for supper after the burial at the cemetery. Family "graveyards" were the rule in-

* There seems to be lack of agreement on this point. Some who were present insist that not wine but cider was served to the serenaders.

**Readers living in these days of the Volstead Act and the Eighteenth Amendment need to remember that the social glass was all but universally enjoyed in the period under consideration. Some Amish were among the first to welcome and adopt a temperance program—not as a political but a sociological and religious measure.

stead of community burial grounds. At least three existed in the Union county community: the Lantz cemetery in East Buffalo township on the Lewisburg-Mifflinburg pike; the Beiler cemetery, three and a half miles farther south and a little west on the Furnace Road, and the Stoltzfus cemetery, north of Buffalo creek in Kelly township on Deacon Stoltzfus' farm.

In the earlier years of the colony young people usually married at twenty-one and then united with the church. In the later years they united with the church at an earlier age. The deacon's youngest daughters were baptized at fifteen and seventeen during the seventies. Unlike the children of Mennonite parentage in parts of Lancaster county, Pennsylvania, Elkhart county, Indiana, and a few other localities where the young people wore fashionable dress before uniting with the church and then on being baptized adopted the plain attire required by the denomination, Union county Amish children almost from infancy dressed like their elders in the garb still in vogue in Old Order Amish communities. When they wished to unite with the church, they or their parents signified their intention to the ministers who forthwith organized a class for instruction. The young people being instructed were spoken of as "following, or attending to, the church," "der Gma nachgehen." The class met with the ministers for instruction before every Sunday service. After the congregation had sung the opening hymns, the ministers and the young people under instruction filed into the room for the regular service.

Instruction was entirely informal. Each minister, speaking without notes, rehearsed parts of the biblical narrative or explained the doctrines of the church. After weeks and months of instruction the ministers announced baptismal services for a certain date in late spring or early summer. The original Amish mode of pouring, with the candidate kneeling on the floor of the dwelling house where church services were being held, was given up in Union county during the controversy that threatened to divide certain Amish churches during the fifties and sixties. According to the new mode the candidate knelt in a stream (in living, that is, running, water) while the officiating "Voelliger Diener" stood in the stream and, dipping water from the stream with his cupped hands, poured it on the head of the applicant.

Before baptism the young men, in addition to the usual vows to renounce the world and remain obedient to the church, were required to promise that they would accept the duties of the ministry if elected by the congregation and chosen by lot. The mar-

riage vows of a bride included a solemn promise to accept the duties of a minister's wife if her husband should be called to the ministry, and to give her active support to his work. To young farmers with meager educational advantages and no talent for public speaking, the taking of this vow was so great a burden that a few refused to unite with the church on that account.

When a vacancy occurred among the ministry, the congregation usually voted to set a date for the election and to call in one or more bishops from neighboring congregations to assist in the ordination. Three steps were involved in selecting a minister: election, by the meeting, of candidates for the lot; choice of one or more of the candidates by lot; and ordination by one or more "Voellige Diener." The time announced for the election having arrived, the entire ministerial body including the "Armendiener" withdrew to a separate room. Members of the congregation were then expected to go to this room one at a time and speak their preference for minister. The voting was not always intelligent. One man received one vote because a woman in the congregation thought he looked so honest. He was chosen by lot and ordained to the ministry. Another received a certain woman's vote because she feared that he might feel slighted if he received none. He, too, was chosen by lot and ordained.* The ministers sometimes secretly rejected unacceptable candidates but probably in the majority of cases they reported all those who had received even one vote. This was true in some cases at least. The announcement of the names of those who were to pass through the lot was the signal for general weeping by wives, mothers, children and other relatives. Sometimes on such occasions almost the entire congregation was in tears, tears prompted by fear and pity, fear lest a loved one should be chosen, pity for his having to bear the burdens of the ministry. A contemporary recalls that "the ordination of a minister in an Amish congregation was the most solemn and pathetic service in the church next to a funeral, with the possible exception of the excommunication of a fallen member."

After the election the ministers prepared to choose by lot one candidate for ordination. On the table they placed as many hymn books as there were candidates. One book contained a slip of paper with the words, "The lot is cast into the lap; but the whole disposing thereof is of the Lord," Proverbs 16:33. The candidates walked to the table one by one and drew a book. The ordaining

* These two instances do not refer to Union county.

bishops then undid the fastenings and examined each book in turn until they found the one containing the slip. Whoever drew the book containing this slip was declared chosen. About 1880, when an election was being held at the home of Samuel Kennel in Union county, a grandson of Deacon Christian Stoltzfus drew the fateful book. The shock was too great for the young man. He fell to the floor unconscious. It was thought that he had fainted. After all efforts to revive him proved unavailing, a physician was called. "They worked with him half a day to revive him," reports one who was present. The unfortunate young man was never ordained. Some of the ministers, however, thought that he should submit himself to the decision of the lot. He never quite recovered from the experience. He was a carpenter by trade and his boss often came upon him to find him sitting or standing, his hammer ready to strike and his eye fixed on vacancy. If undisturbed, he soon resumed his work. He was obsessed by a fear that he was committing a grievous sin by refusing the call of God, but his fear of undertaking the work of the ministry was still greater.

When the ministers saw that this young man would not consent to be ordained, they decided to hold another election. The young man on whom the lot fell in the second election, crushed by the weight of responsibility and his feeling of utter unfitness for the task, experienced fits of melancholy for a considerable period after his ordination. He came to Deacon Christian Stoltzfus one day and begged to be excommunicated. He recovered from his despondency, however, and performed his duties in a thoroughly conscientious manner.

Over its members, the congregation exercised strict discipline. According to the concept of the church and her organization held by the Amish church fathers, none but a perfect and spotless church could be tolerated. The slightest infraction of the numerous church regulations called down on the transgressor the displeasure not only of the ministers but of the entire congregation as well. When met in executive session for the purpose of disciplining a disobedient member the group could be extremely hard and uncompromising.

Students of American church history are aware, to be sure, that the same system of strict discipline and similar methods of administration and enforcement, except in the matter of "shunning" an excommunicated member,* prevailed, not only among the

* "Shunning" here referred to, "die Meidung," might be rendered "avoidance." See Mennonite Confession of Faith (Dordrecht).

Amish and Mennonites of the period under discussion, but also among Dunkards, Quakers, Methodists and Baptists, as well as among some Congregational and Presbyterian groups on the frontier. It was an era when religion was a serious matter, when the business and social relations of the members of a religious society were under the strictest surveillance, when the church demanded that its members keep unspotted, not only from the sins, but also from the follies, of the world. The Amish, however, even in that strict period, were among the most strict.

Among the Union county Amish, discipline, at least in theory, was extremely rigorous. Even then it was not sufficiently strict to satisfy "Diener" Christian King and "Voelliger Armendiener" Michael Schwartz. The broadmindedness of "Voelliger Diener" Elias Riehl and the gentle patience of "Armendiener" Christian Stoltzfus helped make conditions more tolerable. After King moved to Lancaster county and was ordained "Voelliger Diener" there by the extreme "Low Order" Amish, he is reported to have said, "Jetzt hab ich die Gashel und sie soll aw knelle." ("Now I hold the whip and I expect to crack it, too.")*

Discipline had a two fold object: to keep the church pure and to reclaim the erring. Three methods were employed: requiring confession of a fault ("einen Fehler bekennen"), setting back from communion ("von dem Nachtmahl zurückweisen"), and excommunication ("von der Gemeinde absondern.")

Minor offenses were punished by requiring the transgressor to make a public confession, to "confess a fault." Such minor offenses consisted in disobeying some church rule, like sitting for a photograph, for instance, or wearing some forbidden article of dress, or cutting or combing one's hair different from the prescribed mode. On one occasion two of the deacon's daughters let down their hair, combed out the heavy, rippling tresses, bound them with a ribbon, and sat for a photograph. Certain members were shocked, especially since it was falsely reported that they had borrowed fashionable clothing for the occasion. The unhappy young women were obliged to submit to the ordeal of a public confession. When the incident was closed, the elder sister remained somewhat unreconciled, but the younger, grieved and repentant at having caused her good old father pain, brought the photographs to him and said in the Pennsylvania German of that period, "Do,

* The attitude here indicated should not be understood as typical of Amish bishops in general but it throws light on the disciplinary difficulties in the Union county congregation.

Date (pronounced, daw-ty), sin die Photographs. Du kannst sie havve. Du magst sie in der Offa stecka, wann du wit." The aged deacon looked at the photographs for a moment, then handed them back and said earnestly, "Sel guckt zu viel wie Lava. Ich kann sel net ins Offa stecka." (That looks too lifelike; I can't put that into the stove.) The photographs are still preserved.

On another occasion two young women of the congregation rejected two local suitors for two young men from Lancaster county whom they eventually married. A young woman of the congregation, relative of the rejected suitors, wrote a poem describing the cold reception accorded the rejected youths when they next appeared at the home of the young women. The poem added new fuel to the smoldering fires of discord in the congregation. Because both the deacon's family and the bishop's family were involved, a committee of ministers was called in to restore peace. The author of the rhymes was required to confess a fault. The fault in this instance was "misusing her God-given talents for an unworthy purpose."

When one of the numerous investigating committees of ministers from Lancaster and Mifflin counties appeared in Lewisburg one day on their way to the Amish settlement, one of the young men of the congregation exclaimed, "Do komme die ——— wider helfe Druvvel zu mache." Some one not a member of the congregation, overheard his words and thinking it was a good joke reported his words. The matter came to the ears of certain members who at once demanded that he be disciplined. This offense—"calling a fellow church member names"—was too serious to be atoned for by confessing a fault. He was set back from communion.

Confessions were required to be made in prescribed form and manner. The offender rose before the congregation assembled in executive session, and, first, made a humble acknowledgment of wrongdoing; second, pleaded meekly for forgiveness; and, third, gave a solemn promise to walk more circumspectly in the future.

Unfortunately disciplinary problems were often left until near the time for the fall or spring communion service. Since the congregation practiced close communion, it was considered necessary that every one coming to the communion table be properly prepared. Communion was possible only in a pure and united church, the body of Christ. Accordingly two weeks before this service the congregation held a preparatory service ("Ordnungs-Gemeinde," pronounced "Artnings-Gma"). At this time every one was asked, individually, three questions. "Do you have peace with God?"

"With your fellowmen, so far as possible?" "Do you desire to participate in the communion service?" One of the methods of discipline was to deny such participation to offenders against the church rules or to those who refused to confess a fault for such infraction.

In Union county some church members learned to use this service, not as a means of preparation for the communion service, but as an opportunity for retaliation for real or fancied wrongs. It became all too common for members to refuse to consent to the holding of the communion service unless certain others were denied the privilege of participation. Hence, as the years passed and cases for offense multiplied, the preparatory service degenerated into a fault-finding session with charges and counter charges often of a ridiculously petty nature.

The abuse of this system of cleansing the church and preparing the individual members for the proper observance of the communion service made it extremely difficult to hold such a service at all in Union county. Committees of ministers were called in from other counties from time to time and severe penalties imposed upon those accused of disturbing the peace of the congregation. But such a committee would scarcely leave the scene before trouble had broken out afresh. Most of the difficulty was in the ministry, but the lack of harmony and unity among the ministers spread to the laity. Long before the next preparatory service it would again become evident that hostilities between the factions would be renewed. Floods of tears were shed by pious fathers and mothers, but matters seem to have come to such a pass that no permanent peace could be established. From 1873 to 1880 the congregation succeeded in holding only one of its semi-annual communion services! Dissatisfied or vengeful members who had scores to even up at the time of each recurring preparatory service brought so many charges that it was impossible to prepare the congregation for a communion service to be held according to Amish standards—a pure, united church.

The third and most drastic method of discipline was excommunication. This was mandatory for open violation of the moral law. No attempt was made to shield offenders or to whitewash their offense. On one occasion two young men and two young women were convicted of immorality and publicly excommunicated at once. On such occasions excommunication took place in the presence of the entire congregation with visitors and children pres-

ent. Offenders were always tried in a secret session of the congregation, however, to avoid unnecessary publicity.

The excommunication of members was an awful and a solemn procedure. The members to be expelled had been notified in advance and were absent. An air of tenseness filled the house. Sad-faced women wept quietly; stern men sat with faces drawn. The bishop arose; with trembling voice and with tears on his cheek he announced that the guilty parties had confessed their sin, that they were cast off from the fellowship of the church and committed to the devil and all his angels ("dem Teufel und allen seinen Engeln uebergeben").* He cautioned all the members to exercise "shunning" rigorously.

Excommunication had for one of its objects, however, the reclamation of the erring member by showing him his real condition and thus leading him to repentance and reformation, ("Busz and Besserung"). As soon as the transgressing member was expelled, no faithful member would eat with him. To impress the excommunicated member with the seriousness of his condition, members were forbidden under pain of excommunication to receive any help from him. They were required to show him every possible kindness but could receive no favors in return. In a very real sense he was an outcast, rejected of God and man. His only hope was not to die before he should be reinstated, lest he should be an outcast also in the world to come. Such extreme punishment was meted out only for infractions of the moral law, or for stubborn and continued refusal to submit to milder forms of correction for minor offenses. For these latter a public confession might suffice.

Nor was shunning merely an obsolete custom. Many examples could be cited to show that it was observed to the letter. A former resident of Union county recalls that his aunt once came to visit at his father's home. Many years before, she had been excommunicated from the Amish church in Maryland and was living in Delaware where she had united with another denomination. Her brother, whom she came to visit, had not seen her for years

* Compare these truly terrible words with those spoken by a New England minister when he excommunicated Anne Hutchinson from the Puritan congregation in 1638 after a trial for heresy. . . . "in the name of the Lord Jesus Christ and in the name of the church I do cast you out. I do deliver you up to Satan, that you may learn no more to blaspheme, . . . and I do account you from this time forth to be a Heathen and a Publican. Therefore I command you in the name of Christ Jesus and of this church as a Leper to withdraw yourself out of the congregation." Any just comparison between this scene and the scene of an Amish excommunication is certainly in favor of the Amish. In judging the Amish it is always necessary to remember that other denominations could be as stern and hard as they.

and the reunion was a happy one, but when meal-time came one end of the table was set for him and his family while far down at the lower end the sister sat in silence and ate her meal alone.

This practice, called "shunning" ("die Meidung"), was neglected here and there, but Amish Conference reports of the nineteenth century, recently placed in the custody of the Mennonite historical library at Goshen College, uniformly insist that the practice must be kept up without respect of persons ("ohne Ansehung der Person"). The custom was followed strictly in Union county.

As stated above, the Union county Amish normally held communion services (das Nachtmahl* or "Gross Gma," Pennsylvania German for "Grosse Gemeinde" "big meeting"), in the spring near Pentecost and in the fall. It was a day of extraordinary solemnity. All who were able were expected to begin the day with fasting, eating no breakfast on the Sunday morning of "Gross Gma." The congregation met somewhat earlier on this morning. Services began much as usual except that the ministers remained in the "Abrath" longer. The forenoon sermon reviewed the entire history of the Old Testament, the speaker's thesis being that the Law and the Prophets point unmistakably to the coming of Christ as the Saviour of the world. The lunch hour was less noisy than on other Sundays. Conversation was carried on in hushed tones. For the afternoon sermon the "Abrath" chose the most fluent, most eloquent "Voelliger Diener" on the bench. It was his task to prepare the congregation to approach the communion service in the proper spirit. Just as the speaker of the forenoon had summed up without notes of any kind the salient features of the Old Testament story, so the afternoon speaker now reviewed the life of Christ in great detail. As the most talented of the Amish "Voellige Diener" presented the Passion of the Savior, the audience, old and young, wept quietly. The speaker, carried away by the vivid intensity of the scenes he was describing, allowed his voice to rise to an emotional chant peculiarly fitting to his subject. At the conclusion of his sermon, as he reached the climax of the Crucifixion Scene, he stopped, called on the audience to rise for a brief prayer. He then proceeded to break the bread, presenting a small portion to each member as he passed from bench to bench. He usually called on visiting bishops to assist him. No mere minister ("Diener") could assist. Non-members remained seated; members stood. As each member received the bread, he at once placed

* Some Amish communities referred to the communion service as "das Abendmahl." Not so in Union county.

it in his mouth, bending his knees with a quick short movement as he did so and then sitting down. After the bread had been distributed, the wine was poured, the resident and visiting bishops, in the same quiet, dignified manner, passing the communion cup to each member in turn. All received it with the same slight genuflection before sitting down. None but the "Voelliger Diener" was permitted to distribute the bread and wine. The communion service was not regarded as a sacrament in any sense, however. The bread and wine were regarded merely as emblems, and the communion of the Lord's Supper was treated merely as a memorial service commemorating the Death of Christ. The "Armendiener" was charged with the duty of supplying the bread, ordinary leavened bread, and fermented grape wine for the service. As the bishops passed the emblem, the "Armendiener" followed them about the room supplying them with bread or replenishing the communion cup from a large bottle wrapped in a napkin. The entire service was one of impressive simplicity.

After the bread and wine was distributed, one of the ministers was asked by the presiding bishop to read John 13:1-16 explaining as he did so why the ordinance of Washing the Saints' Feet was observed. During the reading the deacon, his wife, and their helpers, provided pails of lukewarm water for observing the ordinance. The reading and exposition completed, the men, two by two, and the women, two by two, proceeded to remove their shoes and stockings and wash one another's feet. While one sat on a bench, the other knelt before him, washed his feet and wiped them with a towel. After the two brethren had washed each other's feet, both arose, clasped right hands and kissed each other, the one saying as he did so, "May God bless us," the other responding, "Amen."

Another beautiful custom was observed immediately after the members had put on their shoes and stockings following feet-washing. Every member deposited a coin in a receptacle placed for that purpose. The money so deposited was placed in the alms fund and was turned over uncounted to the "Armendiener" for poor relief. So far as is known no such fund has ever been audited nor has any "Armendiener" been accused or even suspected of misappropriating an alms fund.

As already indicated the Union county Amish were farmers; that is, all of them lived on farms where they could produce their own food, and wool and flax for clothing and bedding. Few supplies of any kind were purchased. Meat, vegetables, and fruit, tex-

tile manufactures, leather goods, oilcloth, carpets, even furniture, that could not be produced on these farms and in the work shops, were to a large extent considered non-essential. Their purchase and use was condemned as worldly. Hence many of these Amish farmers, in addition to being unsurpassed as workers of the soil, were skilled mechanics. John Riehl, father of "Voelliger Diener" Elias Riehl, was a brazier and blacksmith. From the end of a hard wooden block he had scooped out half spheres holding from a gill to a quart. During the winter and other slack periods on the farm, he used these holes in beating out brass ladles with a globe-like hammer. Then he peddled the ladles over a number of counties in Pennsylvania. Samuel Kennel, John Riehl's son-in-law, worked his sixty-acre farm with the help of his boys but spent much time at his trade as a carpenter, cabinet maker, and coffin manufacturer. When the Stoltzfus brothers took the agency for the Halliday windmill about 1880, Kennel erected the mills for them. Andrew Miller, another son-in-law of John Riehl, had been a flour-miller in Maryland, but turned exclusively to farming in Union county.

Even when an Amish farmer had no well-defined trade, he was usually able to butcher his own hogs and cattle, to cure his pork and beef, to tan leather, manufacture harness, shoe his horses, cobble shoes and boots, do odd bits of blacksmithing, manage an apiary so that honey might be used instead of "store sugar," manufacture furniture, and practice a thousand little economies by setting his hand, brain, and eye to tasks that would save purchasing "store-made" articles. But he was not merely a "Jack of all trades and master of none." First of all, he was a farmer. He gathered stones and burned his own lime in order to sweeten the soil of his farm to produce a more vigorous growth of clover. He used animal fertilizers to keep up the fertility of his soil. He was an expert at breeding, growing and fattening live stock. He learned to use wood ashes to control insect pests. No labor was too arduous or too unpleasant if it was necessary to effect a small economy, to produce a better apple, vegetable, or calf, or to increase the crop of hay or grain.

His industry and thrift were equalled only by that of his wife and daughters. They were, first and last, the inveterate enemies of dust and dirt. Hard wood floors were scrubbed white; pots, pans, and kettles were scoured till they shone. But all this cleaning was not an end in itself, simply the foundation operation on which all the other housewifely processes rested, for the primary business of the kitchen, cellar and milk house was the manufacture

of pure food. Not only did the housewife and her daughters bake the bread from flour ground at the nearby mill from wheat raised on the farm, not only did she can, dry, and preserve fruits and vegetables; but she did her part in the primary processes of production. Milking the cows was woman's work among the Union county Amish. So was the hoeing, weeding, and cultivating of the garden and the white washing of the home-made picket fences that kept the poultry from scratching up her flower beds in the house yard and the vegetables and herbs in the garden. From sour milk she manufactured various kinds of palatable cheese, and from whole milk a delicious full cream cheese. In the manufacture of cloth and yarn from raw flax and wool, she excelled. And her deft fingers cut and sewed the garments for the entire family with no capital outlay except a few cents for the necessary hooks and eyes, buttons being absolutely forbidden for both men's and women's clothing. She manufactured the spicy light beer to prevent illness from drinking too much cold water during the hot season of haymaking and wheat harvest.

But she was more than a manufacturer of foods both substantial and dainty, more than a skillfully artistic producer of clothing and featherbeds and comforts and quilts. She was physician and nurse for her family. More than that she was midwife and angel of mercy for the entire countryside. Long rows of herbs, of which only she knew the magical properties, stood in her garden and at least one of her pantry shelves was crowded with remedies as efficacious as they were simple and harmless. When the stork visited the home of a neighbor, she, unaided, cared for the little stranger and his mother. When the death messenger came, her tender hands washed the body of the dead and wrapped him in his shroud.

The purpose of this short sketch is accomplished if instead of the usual caricature of the Amish as a bovine yokel with long hair and beard, low-crowned, broad-brimmed hat and plain clothing fastened with hooks and eyes, the reader sees in the Amishman of Union county, Pennsylvania, fifty years ago, a useful member of society, a force for simple piety and righteousness, a soul so tremendously in earnest about his relation to God, about the Church and her position and purpose in the world that he grew hard and stern in the presence of wrong doing and evil, but was withal a genial kindly spirit, an ornament to any rural community.

IS DR. KUEHLER'S CONCEPTION OF EARLY DUTCH ANABAPTISM HISTORICALLY SOUND?

An Inquiry into Certain Theses Advanced by W. J. Kuehler in His "History of the Dutch Anabaptists in the 16th Century."*

John Horsch

II.

(Conclusion)

Did the Early Anabaptists Minimize the Church and Doctrinal Confessions?

In Dr. Kuehler's opinion Anabaptism originally held the idea of the church as of minor importance. On the occasion of the organization of the first Swiss Brethren congregation in Zurich, in 1525, he says, "the church was never mentioned"(9). True, as far as the brief record of this occurrence goes. The record states simply that in a meeting of the dissenters at Zurich George Blaurock rose and asked Conrad Grebel to baptize him with the true Christian baptism upon his faith, and that Grebel baptized him and others. However, the introduction of baptism in this circle meant that they henceforth constituted a church and desired to be considered as such. Zwingli, their opponent, himself made mention of this meaning of their act of baptism. Grebel, in his famous letter to Thomas Münzer, written a few months before, admonished him to "organize a Christian church," and not to practice baptism except as an act of the reception of members into a church consisting of believers. Our author says that the Swiss Brethren, while accepting the authority of Scripture, followed their own personal interpretation, which meant that they found in Scripture evidence for their already settled conviction. "But this naive self-deception," he continues, "we find not only with the Anabaptists"(11). However, in another publication our author expresses the opinion that the remarkable fact of the substantial agreement between the Dutch and Swiss Anabaptists was not due to the influ-

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* *Geschiedenis der Nederlandsche Doopsgezinden in de Zestiende Eeuw.* Door Dr. W. J. Kuehler, Haarlem, H. D. Tjeenk Willink & Zoon, 1932. 472 pp.

ence of the Swiss but is to be explained by the fact that both the Dutch and the Swiss had studied the Bible[14].

The adoption of the "Brotherly Union," the Schleitheim Confession, by the Swiss Brethren, in 1527, our author says, was a step in a wrong direction, for with the adoption of a definite statement of faith "the authority of the church rose at the expense of the personal freedom of the members"(18). Referring to Hulshof's work on the Anabaptists of Strasburg,[15] Dr. Kuehler says that at the important center, Strasburg, the Swiss type of Anabaptism was forced into the background by the adherents of Hans Denck, the liberalist, and others(15). While the statement in question is, of course, found at the place indicated in Hulshof, the same author[16] gives an extensive description of how the Swiss Brethren finally gained the ascendency and within a comparatively short time they were the only Anabaptist party in Strasburg and vicinity. The statement, that Blaurock appealed to "the inner light"(11) is unacceptable, being wholly unsubstantiated, without reference or evidence. The same must be said of the remark that Felix Manz, whose martyrdom took place on January 5, 1527, at Zurich, was the first martyr(10). Two Swiss Brethren were burned at the stake by Swiss Catholic authorities before Manz' martyrdom. Eberli Bolt was burned at the stake at Schwyz, on May 29, 1525,[17] and Hans Kern, called Krüsi, was executed in the same way July 27, 1525, at Lucerne.[18]

Our author says that, judging only from the writings of Menno Simons and Dirk Philips, "one would get the misleading impression that doctrinal teaching had a prominent place in the religious life of the early Anabaptists"(282), but he fails to give adequate reasons why the writings of these leaders should not be regarded as showing the doctrinal interest of the great majority of the Mennonites whom they represented. He thinks that the confessions of the martyrs indicate the contrary(282); "they desired no doctrine but life"(250) and they continuously emphasized the imitation of Christ. At the same time our author shows that the "Devoten" in the Roman Catholic Church of the previous century

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[14] *Bericht über die 400-jährige Jubiläumsfeier der Mennoniten,* 1925, p. 57; Kühler, *Het Ontstaan van onze Broederschap,* p. 13.

[15] Hulshof, A., *Geschiedenis van de Doopsgezinden te Straatsburg,* Amsterdam, 1905, p. 33.

[16] *Ibid.,* pp. 202-208.

[17] *Johannes Kesslers Sabbata,* 1909 ,p. 146 f; Bullinger, *Ref. Gesch.,* I, p. 289.

[18] *Johannes Kesslers' Sabbata,* p. 147; Vadian, *Deutsche Historische Schriften,* III, p. 203.

to whom he believes the early Mennonites to have been related, also stressed the imitation of Christ. And yet the Devoten, being Roman Catholics, were not persecuted. It follows that the Mennonites were not persecuted for their piety of life, or imitation of Christ as practiced by the Devoten. The terrible persecution befell them because of the points of faith and practice in which they differed from the Devoten; in other words, they were persecuted because of their doctrinal deviation from Romanism. "If I confessed the god in the bread, I would not need to lay down my life," said the martyr Ursula van Delden, when she was about to mount the wood pile to be executed by burning at the stake.

Professor Kuehler says again: "Constraint of the church upon the personal conviction [of the members] was out of the question; the martyrs felt themselves responsible only to their own consciences" (268). Does this mean that every one was a law unto himself, that the martyrs did not stand for definite Christian doctrine, and that, in their opinion, the church was to be "as free as a social club," as was stated by a recent writer? There is abundant evidence to the contrary. And it is a plain fact that the martyrs did not believe in the authority of conscience. They persistently appealed to Scripture, not to conscience, as a religious authority. They probably realized that from the viewpoint of conscience, even the persecution was excusable. Did not the persecutors feel bound in conscience to exterminate "the Anabaptist heresy?" (John 16:2)

Even Adam Pastor, the liberal leader, of whom our author says, "In short, we find in him the same *geestesrichting* (general religious attitude and position) as we have noted in the case of the martyrs" (285), wrote: "If any man in all the earth can overcome me with the Scriptures, or show that I have erred in any article of the faith, or that I am erring at the present time, I will very gladly accept correction and acknowledge my shame before every one. *But my conscience must first be convinced by divine Scripture.*"[19] And again Adam Pastor said, "Where [in Scripture] is this written? I do not build on reason, point me to Scripture to prove this."[20] Our author says concerning the martyrs, "Only when they were confronted with a better insight into the truth would they review their faith, but then again on the foundation of their own conviction" (268). Regarding the question of how to obtain a better insight into the truth they clearly held the same

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19 *Bibliotheca Reformatoria Neerlandica,* V, p. 371.

20 *Ibid.,* p. 549.

position as just expressed by the quotation from Adam Pastor. In very many instances they said that it was useless to attempt to convince them except by reasons from Scripture. This is stated also in the two passages from confessions of martyrs to which our author in this connection refers in a foot note.[21]

Professor Kuehler is of the opinion that at an early date the majority of the Mennonites were led to place greater emphasis on doctrine than they had in their earliest period. "They mistook a temporary, passing form in which the Anabaptist movement manifested itself," he says, "for its essence" (290, 6); they endeavored to hold fast to a doctrinal position which in our author's view, was only of an ephemeral nature. An indication of this endeavor, he says further, was the excommunication of Adam Pastor for teaching the denial of the deity of Christ (290). Naturally this suggests the question, What, in the opinion of the author, is the essence, the distinctive character of the earliest Anabaptism? Obviously, this query is to be answered before the question can be intelligently considered, What is the foundation for the claim of the liberal Mennonitism of to-day that the liberals are the true spiritual children of the earliest Anabaptists? Even if the assumption were correct that the latter defended the principle of unbounded liberty within the church, would this suffice to justify the view that the modern liberals are of one and the same religious party as the early Anabaptists? Would a society standing for liberty alone be a Christian church? We miss in the book a statement of wherein the essence of early Anabaptism consisted.

Was the Swiss Brethren Movement Tainted with Fanaticism?

The Swiss Brethren movement, in the opinion of Dr. Kuehler, was tainted with fanaticism (12). He makes this serious charge dogmatically without substantiation, and without giving citations or evidence of any sort. Again, he speaks of religious insanity and immorality among them (21), and refers to Sebastian Franck's *Chronica* for substantiation. This chronicler makes mention of two alleged cases of this kind: a woman at Appenzell in Switzerland asserted that she was Christ and chose twelve disciples; and at St. Gall Thomas Schugger killed his own brother. According to Sebastian Franck, Schugger addressed his brother with the words: "Kneel down, I have been commanded by the Lord to cut off your

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[21] Van Braght, T. J., *Het Bloedig Tooneel*, 1685, II, p. 211; *Martyrs' Mirror*, Elkhart, Indiana, 1886, p. 295.

head." The brother obeyed and was murdered with a sword which Thomas carried.

As concerns the first case, that of the woman in Appenzell, all evidence points in the direction that Sebastian Franck was misinformed. Various reports of fanaticism and abominable immorality were spread about the Swiss Brethren in Appenzell. The accounts of these charges which have come down to us are not given on the basis of first hand information. There is no evidence of their reliability. In the archives of this canton, there is not a trace to be found of such acts. When some of these reports came to Zwingli's ears, he preached a sermon against the Anabaptists and referred to abominations which he believed were openly practiced by them in Appenzell.[22] He failed to take into consideration that no civil government worthy of the name could tolerate such immoralities, and that, by his charges against the Anabaptists, he was in fact incriminating the Council of Appenzell as well. If the reports which had reached Zwingli were true, the civil authorities of Appenzell must have been more fully informed about these crimes than Zwingli at Zurich, but nothing had been done to take the alleged transgressors to task. The Council received word of Zwingli's sermon with indignation. Zwingli saw himself compelled to write them a letter of apology.[23]

Of the appalling fratricide of Thomas Schugger we have a reliable account by Dr. Joachim Vadian, of St. Gall, who officiated at his trial. Vadian's account shows that the story, as told by Franck, is untrue. The occasion was a festival in the house of Thomas Schugger's father, on "crazy Tuesday" which marks the beginning of Lent, in the year 1526. The invited guests freely indulged in wine and were together till daybreak. Vadian says that Thomas "either had taken too much wine or had in some other way lost his powers of mind." The statement that he addressed his brother as stated by Franck is without foundation. Being, as Vadian says, a strong man, Thomas seized his brother under the arms and made him kneel before him. No one of those present had any idea of his intentions, or of what was to take place. Suddenly Thomas drew his sword and killed his brother with one stroke, the act resulting of course in indescribable terror among those present, including the fratricide himself.

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22 See Zwingli's letter to Vadian, dated January 17, 1526, *Zwinglis Werke,* VIII, p. 505 ff.

23 *Ibid.,* p. 522 f.

The fact alone that Thomas Schugger carried a sword is sufficient to indicate that he was not an Anabaptist. All the early Swiss chroniclers who mentioned the Anabaptists (Herman Miles, Johannes Kessler, Fridolin Sicher, Joachim Vadian) state that they took a strict attitude against carrying any weapons. Thomas was a fiddler who played at dances, as Vadian states, while the Anabaptists condemned dancing. Vadian says further that Thomas was a shiftless man and had often been warned by him to turn a new leaf and show more concern for providing for his family. There are a number of other indications that he was not a dissenter. The Swiss Brethren denied indignantly that Thomas Schugger was a member of their church.

The groundless assertion that Schugger was an Anabaptist and that his crime was the natural fruit of Anabaptist principles, has done the Anabaptist cause untold harm. Zwingli, referring to this fratricide, wrote in his last book against the Swiss Brethren: "Among them it is no crime to lay murderous hands upon a brother; how much less will they listen to an accusation of adultery and lewdness [as crimes]."[24] According to Zwingli's repeated statements these things were not considered unlawful among them. Needless to say, these charges cannot be accepted on the authority of Zwingli. The accusation of fanaticism against the Swiss Anabaptists, as made by our author, rests largely on the same authority. It is a matter of regret that even in a recent German Mennonite work Thomas Schugger is said to have been a member of the Swiss Brethren Church.[25] Sebastian Franck, in his version of the story, indicates that he could not vouch for its accuracy.

Was Menno Simons Unorthodox and Lacking in Courage?

The earliest writings of Menno Simons show beyond a question of doubt that his teaching had a vital doctrinal foundation. This will be indicated later by quotations from his works. Dr. Kuehler, referring to a statement by S. Hoekstra, says that Menno Simons and Dirk Philips were unorthodox on the doctrine of the Trinity. They did not believe, he alleges, in the personality of the Holy Spirit, but not knowing that the latter belief is essential for the doctrine of the Trinity, they supposed themselves to be orthodox. In other words, their claim of orthodoxy on this point must be charged to their supposed ignorance. But Menno, as well as

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[24] Jackson, S. M., *Selected Works of Huldreich Zwingli,* Philadelphia, 1901, p. 171.

[25] *Mennonitisches Lexikon,* II, p. 33.

Dirk, stated repeatedly that he believed in the personality of the Holy Ghost. Our author says further that the orthodoxy of Menno and Dirk Philips on the natural sinfulness of man and on the Atonement was nothing more than an illusion (283). He quotes a passage from Dirk Philips in which it is stated that through Christ's work of redemption all infants are saved. This means, says our author, that they are "in every respect like Adam and Eve before the fall." However, Dirk Philips, as well as Menno taught emphatically that, while the infants are "in some respects"[26] like our first parents in Eden, the latter were before the Fall not sinful by nature; they were free from the natural inclination to evil which their descendants have inherited from them. But despite the fallen nature which the infants inherited, they are saved by the Atonement (not indeed by baptism) so long as they have not come to the age of responsibility and it is impossible for them to exercise personal faith in Christ. In the paragraph following the one which contains the passage quoted by our author, Dirk Philips says:

> Hence we conclude with the apostles and with the entire Holy Scriptures that inherited sin has been atoned for and taken away by Christ to this extent: The infants may not be judged and condemned for the sin of Adam. That the nature of children is inclined toward evil does not condemn them; it is through the grace of God not accounted as sin to them, but so long as they are childlike and without the knowledge of good and evil, they are pleasing and acceptable to God through Jesus Christ.[27]

Menno Simons wrote on the point in question:

> Just as Adam and Eve were bitten and poisoned by the infernal serpent, and became sinful by nature and would have been subject to eternal death, if God had not through Jesus Christ again accepted them in grace [after they had made the promise Gen. 3:15 their own], as stated above, so also all we who are their descendents are by birth of a sinful nature, are poisoned by the serpent, inclined toward evil and thus by our own inherent nature are children of hell, etc. We cannot be saved therefrom (we speak of those who have come to the years of understanding and have committed sins) unless we, by true and unfeigned faith, accept Christ Jesus, the only and eternal means of grace, and thus with the eyes of our mind look upon the brazen serpent, which for us miserable, poisoned sinners, is lifted up by God our heavenly Father, as a sign of salvation; for apart from Him and without Him there is no salvation for our souls, no atonement

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26 *Bibl. Ref. Neerl.*, X, p. 75.

27 *Ibid.*, p. 92.

nor peace, but only disgrace, wrath and death is to be looked for eternally.[28]

Space is given to the above lengthy paragraph from Menno Simons' writings because it is a reply to a number of assertions made by our author as to the alleged unorthodoxy of Menno, not only on original sin but also on the atonement and other points. Many similar citations could be given. This quotation from Menno is taken from a booklet which he wrote in 1552, i. e., in the last decade of his life.

Our author speaks of Menno Simons as "the regenerator of the Anabaptism of the Netherlands"(162) and in another place as "the regenerator of Anabaptism" without modification(330). "Menno purged the polluted [Anabaptist] current which had entered the Netherlands from Germany"(162). And again, strange as it may seem, he describes Menno as a weakling, "a servant of men" who in his supposed conflict with Leonard Bouwens and Dirk Philips showed that he lacked the courage of his convictions and did not possess distinct qualities making for leadership. The question is certainly pertinent, how could such a man be considered the regenerator of Anabaptism? As a matter of fact, Menno was not the reformer of any Anabaptist sect or group in any such sense as Luther and Zwingli were the reformers of sections of the Roman Catholic Church, and this is indeed not asserted by our author. And Menno's influence did not extend over the great contemporary evangelical Anabaptist sects of the Swiss Brethren and Hutterites. In a later period, our author thinks, Menno became one of the corrupters of Anabaptism.

Dr. Kuehler justly criticises Menno because of his hesitation in laying down his office as a priest and renouncing Romanism, after his enlightenment through the study of Scripture(163). And yet we must not overlook the plain fact that to take this step meant for Menno to take upon himself the heavy cross of persecution and become an outcast; it meant that henceforth he would be compelled to live, as it were, the life of a martyr. And did not both Luther and Zwingli, the leaders of the state church type of Protestantism, advise the priests of Saxony and Zurich to continue in the priesthood until the civil governments permitted the abolition of the mass? The truth is that these reformers not only gave the priests this advice but forbade them to introduce evangelical practices without the consent of the civil authorities. Menno did

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[28] Menno Simons, *Opera,* 1681, p. 461 b; *Complete Works,* II, p. 261 b.

not, like Luther and Zwingli, have the civil authorities on his side to give him protection.

Was Adam Pastor the Most Notable Early Leader of the Dutch Anabaptists?

Adam Pastor, the Mennonite elder who was expelled from the church for the denial of Christ's deity, was in our author's opinion the most notable of the Anabaptist leaders of that period in the Netherlands. On the basis of a certain obscure statement found in Menno Simons' writings[29] Professor Kuehler defends the supposition that Pastor was excommunicated by Dirk Philips without Menno's consent(288). But it is unbelievable that the statement in question refers to Adam Pastor and Dirk Philips at all. It is an impossible assumption that Menno in this statement condemns Pastor's expulsion. In the very book containing the statement just mentioned Menno says that the denial of Christ's deity is "a terrible blasphemy, a curse and an abomination."[30] And not only in his later books, but in his earlier writings as well (within less than a decade of his conversion), Menno stated emphatically in various places that excommunication is to be used in cases of persistent false teaching as well as of unrepented transgression. Besides, Pastor held Menno, with others, personally responsible for his expulsion.[31]

Our author describes Pastor as the true spiritual father of liberal Mennonitism. It is however an obvious fact that Pastor represented a curiously inconsistent type of liberalism. We have quoted him above as stressing the authority of the Word. Passing strange it is that he nevertheless denied the deity of Christ. That he was vitally interested in doctrine is abundantly evident from his principal book, *Distinction Between True and False Doctrine*.[32] While, needless to say, Menno Simons denied to the civil authorities the right of choosing the ministers for the church, Adam Pastor apparently denied this right to the church as well. Pastor wrote:

> But I am speaking of the civil authorities and the church. Where is it written that the civil authorities and the church [congregation] should send [or call] ministers? Even if your churches were pious, this would then not be otherwise than as if the

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29 *Opera,* p. 385.
30 *Ibid.,* p. 387.
31 *Bibl. Ref. Neerl.,* V, p. 522.
32 *Ibid.,* V, pp. 361-581.

> sheep should appoint their own shepherds. If the congregation would appoint their own preachers, I fear that they would choose as those having itching ears, [II Tim. 4:3] and would desire such as would lay pillows under their arms [Ezek. 13:20].[33]

If our author's opinion that Pastor's followers (sometimes called Adamites) were numerous be correct, it would be singular indeed that it is impossible to give the name of even one of his followers. His assertion that the martyr Herman van Vlekwijk, who was burned at the stake in 1569 at Bruges, was a follower of Pastor is untenable and cannot be proved. From the extant confession of this martyr it is clear that he was not an adherent of Pastor. This was conclusively shown by Professor Samuel Cramer,[34] the predecessor of our author as head professor in the Mennonite seminary in Amsterdam. Carel van Ghendt stated that Pastor, with a small number (*een kleyn hoopken*) of followers, separated himself from the Mennonites. There is no tangible evidence that there ever was a congregation of followers of Adam Pastor. Arend van Buchell stated that in his travels he found in 1591 on the Dutch island of Vlieland "many Adamites and Mennonites and other parties of Anabaptists."[35] Our author concludes from this statement that there was at that time a congregation of followers of Pastor on that island. The statement is scarcely definite enough to warrant this conclusion. It should be recalled that the opponents of the Anabaptists in that period delighted in ascribing to the most offensively heretical Anabaptists as much importance and strength as possible. And the sect of the so-called naked-goers were also called Adamites.

According to our author the followers of Adam Pastor emphasized holiness of life to a greater degree than any other Anabaptists. This assertion is based on a statement made by J. Wigandus in a work against the Anabaptists published in 1582. Wigandus believed that the piety of the Anabaptists was hypocrisy, hence the most unorthodox were naturally supposed to be the most pious. He was moved by a blind hatred of Anabaptism, and made the above statement without even an attempt to substantiate it. Another contemporary writer, Hamelmann, says on the contrary, that the followers of Pastor were not as strict in their way of living as were the Mennonites. Dr. Kuehler admits that Adam Pastor "in the course of the years" was forgotten, but thinks that

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[33] *Ibid.*, p. 402.
[34] *Ibid.*, VII, p. 194.
[35] *Bibl. Ref. Neerl.*, V, p. 324.

his ideas continued to exercise an influence(290). He does not state his reasons for this opinion. On the contrary there is good evidence that his writings were forgotten with him. If Hamelmann's statement that Pastor died in the Roman Catholic city of Münster and was buried in the Ueberwasser cemetery is correct, he was obviously believed to be a Roman Catholic, since no Protestant, much less an Anabaptist, would have been tolerated in the city or would have been buried in the cemetery. Had Pastor returned into the Roman Church, or given any occasion for believing that he was a Romanist? These are questions regarding which there is no information.

Did the Early Anabaptists Defend the Concept of a Sinlessly Perfect Church?

A chapter in the book under discussion, treating on the development of the Mennonite Church in the Netherlands after the first decade of its existence, has the title, "The Church Without Spot or Wrinkle." Professor Kuehler defends the opinion that the early Mennonites, under the leadership of Leonard Bouwens, Dirk Philips and Menno Simons, undertook to establish a church which was in a literal sense, as it were, without spot or wrinkle, an absolutely perfect church. And "the church without spot or wrinkle," he says, "was in its kind just as fatal an error as formerly the New Jerusalem of the Münsterites"(346). He asserts that the early Mennonites stressed the purity of the church to a far greater degree than the purity or piety of the individual members of the church. "The question, What must I do to be saved?" says Dr. Kuehler, "was replaced by another question, What conditions must I meet to belong to the church of God which warrants me eternal salvation?"(304). In their opinion, he says further, "Salvation is possible only through the mediation of the church"(303); "the church was made almost an idol"(268).

As just indicated, Dr. Kuehler holds that the early Mennonites emphasized the idea of perfection for the church rather than for the individual member. He thinks that discipline was exercised with the hope of constituting a sinlessly perfect church. It is, of course, a plain fact that the early Mennonites held the toleration of open transgression within the church to be an offense, but this does not mean that discipline was practiced for the purpose just indicated. They did not claim sinless perfection for the church; on the contrary, they often expressed themselves in a way excluding the idea of perfection. Menno, for example, wrote to John

a'Lasco that the doctrine, faith, and ordinances of the brotherhood were in conformity to God's Word and that the same could be said regarding the life of most (not all) of the church members. This is an acknowledgment of failings within the church.

There was of course in the Mennonite Church no thought of using exclusion or excommunication in the case of any and every evident sinful imperfection, and yet, this would obviously have been necessary if the aim of discipline had been to constitute a church "without spot or wrinkle." Even in case of transgression which called for expulsion it was sometimes decided to exercise patience. Menno Simons says that in particular instances the church had patience for a year or two with such transgressors. This means that these persons were for some time tolerated within the church despite their sin. Besides, the Mennonite leaders, pointing to Judas among the apostles of our Lord, freely recognized that hypocrites (who are not Christians at all) may be found in the church. All this indicates that the idea of a sinlessly perfect church was foreign to their thinking. Pilgram Marbeck stated the position of the evangelical Anabaptists as follows: "As concerns faults or failings, we are falling far behind the church in apostolic times, and even the apostolic church was not without faults."[36] In the great debate held at Bern in 1538, Hans Lueti, a spokesman of the Swiss Brethren, replied to the charge that they claimed sinless perfection for themselves personally and for the church collectively, by saying that a perfect church would not have need of discipline. "If we were perfect, we could do without discipline."[37]

Clearly, neither the apostles of Christ nor the early Mennonite leaders believed that the individual members of the church, or the church as a body, were sinlessly perfect. Quite true, Menno and his friends stressed the need of holy living. They taught that true Christianity must manifest itself by newness of life. They found it necessary to defend themselves against the charge that the emphasis which they laid on holiness of life was an indication that they disowned the doctrine of justification by faith, a charge which is repeated by Dr. Kuehler(283). We shall see directly that this charge is unfounded. But with all their emphasis on a holy life—a life whose influence is out and out for God—they realized that the life of the Christian is not sinlessly perfect. Menno Simons often confessed himself a sinner before God though, according to his testimony, his life since his conversion had been without offence.

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[36] Loserth, J., *Pilgram Marbecks Antwort.* Wien und Leipzig, 1929, p. 88.
[37] *Acta des Gesprächs,* fol. 94.

Dirk Philips, his most prominent collaborator, wrote: "It must therefore be recognized that every Christian must confess himself a sinner."[38] Menno says in one place that even his prayer has sometimes been tainted by sin.

The theory that the early Mennonites stressed the purity of the church above that of the individual, and that in their view the great question was, What conditions must I meet to belong to the church which warrants me eternal salvation? cannot be substantiated, and Dr. Kuehler fails to adduce any proof for it. Menno Simons and Dirk Philips always taught emphatically that salvation depends on the true inner relationship of the individual toward God. The church and the Christian ordinances were not believed to be the means for obtaining salvation; the ordinances (sacraments) were instituted for those who were saved. They believed that the doors of the church should be opened only for those who were already saved by repentance and faith and desired to prove their faith by obedience. It has been generally supposed that among the reformers of the sixteenth century Luther in particular emphasized the doctrine of salvation through faith in Christ and in His atoning sacrifice. In plain fact, however, Menno Simons stressed this doctrine as much as any other reformer, and he was more consistent than Luther in his teaching on this point, since he rejected the doctrine of baptismal regeneration and forgiveness of sin through partaking of the communion. Many pages could be filled with excerpts from Menno's writings in which he says that correct religious forms are in themselves without avail and church membership is in no sense a guarantee of salvation. The writer may be pardoned for referring to his book on Menno Simons, pp. 237-261, containing many selections from Menno's writings on these points. Menno says for example:

> There will eternally not be found any other remedy for our sins, neither in heaven nor on earth, neither works nor merits nor sacraments, even though they are used according to Scripture, nor enduring persecution and tribulation, nor the innocent blood of the martyred saints, neither angels nor men nor any other remedy, but only the crimson, immaculate blood of Christ, the sacrificial lamb which was out of pure grace, and love, shed for the remission of our sins.[39]
>
> Again, the prince of darkness, the old serpent and the devil, can transform himself into an angel of light. Nothing of an external nature is oppressive or vexatious to him; if he can only

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[38] *Bibl. Ref. Neerl.,* X, p. 303.

[39] *Opera,* p. 113 b; *Works,* I, p. 155 b.

> gain possession of the citadel of our hearts, and expel therefrom Christ's nature, spirit and power, he has already won the price of his craftiness. Yea, if a man were baptized even by Peter or Paul himself, and received the bread of the holy supper from the Lord's own hand, and never again witnessed the idolatry of the priests, yet if he retained but one of the fruits of the devil whether hatred, envy or bitterness, revengefulness or avarice, pride or unchastity, or any other vice, it would have to be said with the Scriptures that his spirit is ungodly and his life hypocrisy.[40]

Unfortunately for our author's amazing theory regarding the absolute purity of the church, the Mennonite leaders in their writings very seldom used the words "without spot or wrinkle" (taken from Ephesians 5:27) and Menno Simons stated expressly that, when using this expression he did not have in mind an absolutely perfect church. He says:

> In the fifth place we teach, seek and demand that the Lord's supper be observed as the Lord Jesus Himself has instituted and observed it, namely with a church that is outwardly without spot or blemish, that is without noticeable transgression and wickedness; for the church judges that which is visible. But what is inwardly evil, but does not appear outwardly to the church, such God alone will judge and pass sentence on them; for He alone, and not the church, discerns hearts and reins.[41]

Professor Kuehler says that in an earlier period those martyrs who were unable to receive baptism, were believed to be saved nevertheless, but in the second half of the sixteenth century, "when the church had been made almost an idol," the brotherhood discarded this position regarding baptism (268). But the position ascribed here by Dr. Kuehler to the early Mennonites was always the position of the Mennonite Church. Our author's assertions concerning the views of the early Mennonites on the absolute purity and the mediation of the church constitute in reality an accusation which is as groundless as it is serious.

Was the alleged Perfectionism of the Early Anabaptists due to impure Ambitions of the Leaders?

Our author then ascribes the alleged aim to establish a church "without spot or wrinkle" to the supposed impure motives (245) and the inordinately selfish ambition and lust of power of Leonard Bouwens and Dirk Philips (427, 397, 301) who, he believes, finally coerced Menno Simons to submit to their dictatorial de-

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[40] *Opera,* p. 211; *Works,* I, p. 265 a.

[41] *Opera,* p. 44 b; *Works,* II, p. 243 a.

mands regarding the immediate excommunication of those who fall into gross sin, and the avoidance of the excommunicated. He describes Menno as a weakling who lacked the courage of his conviction (163, 321). The student of history will naturally ask, On what basis are these assertions made? Before considering this question attention must be paid to the sources on which the author bases his assertions. If it can be shown that the sources are unreliable, the assertions fall to the ground. First a word is in order in regard to the general sources of the history of the Dutch Mennonite Church in the second half of the sixteenth century. Professor Samuel Cramer, in volume VII of the *Bibliotheca Reformatoria Neerlandica,* has republished the most important books which come into consideration. With the exception of Obbe Philips' *Confessions* these sources are largely of a secondary nature. The student of history perusing these books is kept guessing how much of their contents (excepting such parts as can be verified from primary sources) can be accepted as accurate history. Especially is this true of the first book of this collection, the *Anabaptist Babel,* by an anonymous author, and of another book consisting of the insertions made by Gerardus Nicolai in the Dutch edition of the infamous work of Bullinger against the Swiss Brethren.

Now, the principal basis for the supposition of impure ambitions on the part of the Mennonite leaders mentioned above is a story found in a book written in 1630 by Hans Alenson, a Waterlandian minister, and reprinted in the volume by Professor Cramer just referred to. The story, which is alleged to have been told by Apollonia Ottes, who is supposed to have been a member of a Mennonite church at Leeuwarden in Friesland, is clearly a fabrication, as will be indicated. Here is the story.

Menno Simons, on his way from northern Germany to Harlingen in Friesland to attend a conference of the elders of the church, was accompanied from Leeuwarden to Harlingen by Apollonia Ottes. In Harlingen this woman hid behind the door of the room in which the elders were in conference. She heard their discussions in regard to marital avoidance and other questions. Finally Menno Simons was asked to leave the room ("having been humiliated and driven into a corner," as our author says), and as he passed out, Leonard Bouwens, who stood near the door, laid his hand on Menno's head and said, "Menno has not yet grown above us [in other words, we are still his equals in authority]; if he cannot or will not follow us, we must do to him as we have done to the other ministers [excommunicate him]." On hearing this

Menno was frightened and terrified. Hans Alenson adds, "Apollonia said that she saw this with her own eyes and heard it with her ears, and thus the good man [Menno], through the threats that were made against him, became a servant of men."

Now Hans Alenson did not have this story direct from Apollonia Ottes. He says that Apollonia related it to "one of our ministers who is yet living" whose name he does not disclose. It is not clear from Alenson's account whether this anonymous minister told him the story personally, or whether he told it to some one else who in turn related it to Alenson.

Before considering further the question of the reliability of this story we shall relate another supposed incident told by the same anonymous person, which may throw some light on the nature of the first story. Again we note that we are left in the dark as to the question to whom the anonymous man related this incident. Alenson says it was told in the house of Isaac de Grand at Emden, but intentionally conceals the name of the one who told it. Here is the story. Menno Simons in his last sickness was visited by a brother named Alle Visscher. When the latter was about to depart he asked Menno for a word of farewell by which he might remember him. Complying with his desire Menno said: "Do not be a servant of men, as I have been."

Coming back now to the question of the trustworthiness of Apollonia's story (assuming that she is not a fictitious character), we note first that no one has yet been able to locate the story in point of time. This is admitted by our author. Furthermore, we observe that the alleged threat made by Leonard Bouwens that Menno was to be excommunicated "like the other ministers" contradicts our author's statement(290) that Adam Pastor was the only person expelled from the church for erroneous doctrine. The question is pertinent, did Apollonia, when she told the story, know that Menno Simons in his writings stated repeatedly that excommunication, when used without adequate Scriptural cause, is to be feared only by those themselves who use it in such a way? Did she know that excommunication was not used by the main body of the Mennonites against the Waterlanders when they withdrew, and that the Waterlanders held the very views on which she believed Menno to have differed from Bouwens. And is it not an absurdity to suppose that Bouwens, a younger man who was far less prominent and influential than Menno and who some time later was deposed from the ministerial office, should deal with Menno in such a way as alleged in the story? And how is the fact

to be accounted for that it was not until seventy years after Menno Simons' death that the story was published? Dr. Kuehler says, in agreement with Alenson, that Apollonia Ottes told her story in her old age. This would, of course, explain why earlier writers defending the Waterlandian position against Menno, notably Herman Timmerman in his *Verklaringhe,* published in 1560, evidently knew nothing of the story. But why should Apollonia keep such a story a secret for scores of years?

The story has the unmistakable ear-marks of a fabrication. It is clearly based on the supposition that there was a difference of opinion and attitude regarding church discipline between Bouwens and Philips on the one hand and Menno on the other. It is apparently calculated to prove this supposition. There is good evidence that this supposition is contrary to fact. The story of Apollonia Ottes would not have found credence during Menno's lifetime.

Were the Waterlandian Mennonites Liberal (Vrijzinnig)?

Menno Simons, in the later period of his life, changed his view regarding a certain phase of church discipline, namely on the question as to whether gross sin should be followed by immediate expulsion from the church, or whether three admonitions, according to Matt. 18:15-17, must precede expulsion in every instance. In his writings Menno freely stated that he changed his mind on this question. In the first period of his labors he, with his collaborators, had held to the view that there must be no expulsion without three preceding admonitions, and in our author's opinion, his change of position on this point is to be ascribed mainly to the influence of Leonard Bouwens, one of the three or four elders (bishops) of the church in the lower countries. Menno wrote in 1558 that his former opinion, as expressed in his *Loving Admonition,* of 1541, had been due to his inexperience "for to the best of my knowledge I neither heard nor knew at that time anything of such sins as fornication, adultery and such like among the Brethren. It also appeared to me impossible that those who had entered with us upon the path of righteousness should have any desire or will to such gross abominations."[42] This departure from the former practice resulted, in 1555, in the separation of the congregations in the Waterland which continued in the older usage, from the main body of the Mennonites. The Waterland is a small district between Amsterdam and Purmerend, comprising less than forty

[42] *Opera,* p. 198 a; *Complete Works,* I, p. 251 a.

square miles. There was some controversy between the main body of the Mennonites and the Waterlandians, but it may be said that they finally parted as brethren.

The differences between the Waterlandians and the main body of Mennonites were clearly not so fundamental as would appear from Dr. Kuehler's book. He refers to the position of the Waterlandians as "vrijzinnig" (liberal). As concerns their theological position they were decidedly conservative, as were all other Mennonites of that period. They differed from the main body of Mennonites in regard to certain points in the practice of discipline only, and they were the first to disown Menno's peculiar view of the incarnation of Christ. In the course of the seventeenth century they gradually became less strict in discipline; it is therefore correct to say that they were less conservative in this respect than the Mennonites in general. That they were not "vrijzinnig," or theologically liberal, is abundantly evidenced by the writings of their leaders, and particularly by their confessions of faith. The Waterlandian confession of 1577[43] was the first or oldest confession of faith of Mennonites in the Netherlands. And only recently a Dutch Mennonite writer in *Rondom den Moerdyk* has pointed out the erroneousness of the assertion that the early Mennonite confessions were not considered as binding. The various Mennonite groups adopted definite confessions of faith. True, as our author says, "the secret fellowship with God remains, as it always did, a mystery, and cannot be described" (462). But is this a good reason for taking a non-doctrinal general attitude? It goes without saying that neither the Mennonite confessions nor the confessions of other denominations aim to describe the inner experiences with God. The value of definite Christian truth, or doctrine, arises from the fact that the true inner experiences with God are conditioned on the definite acceptance of and surrender to the Christian message, and this message consists of specific historic facts and definite truths or doctrines.

Article XX of the Waterlandian confession of 1577, demands that grievous sin (such as in the other Mennonite groups was followed by immediate expulsion) "shall be punished by demanding a public confession of the sin before the church," implying that a refusal to comply with this demand resulted in expulsion. Now a confession of the sin before the church, and of repentance was all that was asked of expelled members by the main

[43] Printed in *Doopsgezinde Bijdragen,* 1904, pp. 145-156.

body of Mennonites for reinstatement to full fellowship. Article XXI of this confession treats "On Avoidance" (*mijding*) and demands that church members abstain from eating and drinking with excommunicated persons, as a measure of making them ashamed of their sin and leading them to repentance. No exception is stated in the case of married couples of whom one was expelled (marital avoidance). Within a decade or two after the schism, the Waterlanders discarded the practice of marital avoidance while most of the other Mennonite groups discarded it somewhat later. Article XXII of the first Waterlandian confession teaches feet washing.

Any one inclined to accept the opinion of our author that the Waterlandians were "vrijzinnig" should study their confessions of faith, in particular articles XI to XVI of the confession of 1577, which treat of *erfzonde* (original sin), redemption, the Atonement, etc., in a thoroughly orthodox way. It would obviously be impossible to state the doctrine of original sin in stronger or more radically orthodox terms. If our author's opinion that Menno Simons and Dirk Philips did not accept the doctrine of original sin were correct, it would obviously follow that the Waterlandians were theologically more conservative than these two outstanding leaders. According to Dr. Kuehler this confession teaches that "all who manifest a Christ-like disposition are members of his church," regardless of the religious doctrine to which they may adhere. (357) The confession states, however, that "all who receive Christ's word, repent, and believe in Him" are saved, and again: "All men in all the earth who through the power and grace of God have come to a renewing of the inner man and in whom is found the disposition of Christ and true obedience toward God constitute the church of God." Article XIX of the larger Waterlandian confession (directly to be further mentioned), "On the Knowledge of Christ and its Necessity," teaches that knowing and understanding Christ's message is necessary for salvation. If our author's view of the Waterlandian position regarding the church were correct, their disapproval of mixed marriages (between church members and outsiders) would be inconsistent. Article VI of this confession says: "We confess Christ Jesus to be truly God and God's Son from eternity, and that He became a true man, having the divine and the human natures."

The larger Waterlandian Confession, consisting of forty articles, drawn up in 1580, or somewhat later, by Hans de Ries, the most prominent and influential minister of the Waterlandians of that time, and Lubbert Gerrits, is of special interest in the face

of the supposition that the Waterlandians were theologically liberal. This confession is, like the earlier confession of the Waterlandian churches, decidedly conservative in sentiment and tone. On a number of articles it is more full and explicit and therefore, from the conservative viewpoint, more satisfactory than the Dortrecht Confession of 1632 which is in general use among the conservative Mennonites of America. The larger Waterlandian Confession shows that the Waterlandians desired to be known as Mennonites and that they agreed with the larger Mennonite bodies on a number of points which our author lays to the charge of a supposed endeavor for establishing "a church without spot or wrinkle" on the part of Menno Simons and his immediate collaborators. The Mennonite usage of ordaining ("bevestigen," or "bestätigen") ministers by the laying on of the hands by those already ordained to this office is denounced by our author as limiting the power of the congregation(301). Now, this usage is taught in a special article of this confession. The confession also states that ministers should be chosen by the ministry and the congregation conjointly.

Our author says that toward the end of the sixteenth century among the least conservative Mennonites (principally the Waterlandians) the prevailing individualism "had no aversion against any unorthodoxy; every new heresy, be it ever so feared and detested, found sooner or later its representation in the brotherhood" (460). "With the entry of Socinianism [unitarianism] a new period began in the history of the brotherhood"(461). These statements naturally raise a number of questions. Does our author hold that among the Waterlandians or any other Mennonite group of that period the denial of Christ's deity found support? If this be his view we should certainly desire further data to the point. To accept such statements on the basis of the mere dogmatic assertions is out of the question. No writer on this subject has yet been able to name a single Mennonite minister or writer previous to the middle of the nineteenth century who questioned the deity of Christ or any other fundamental of the Christian faith. The Waterlanders, as already indicated, were thoroughly orthodox on the fundamentals of the faith. Hans de Ries was the outstanding defender of the deity of Christ, not only among the Waterlandians but among all Netherlandian Mennonites, against the Socinians.[44]

Our author says that among the Waterlanders "the believers

[44] See his book *Klaer Bewys von de Euwigheydt ende Godheyt Jesu Christi* (Clear *Proof of the Eternity and Deity of Jesus Christ*). Haerlem, 1672.

held the handle" and the congregations could silence transgressing ministers(352). The same is true of all the early Mennonites. He charges that in the main body of Mennonites (in contrast to the Waterlanders) the elders (bishops) through lust of power made themselves kings while they called themselves ministers or servants(301). He thinks that the supposed attempt to establish a church without spot or wrinkle was mainly due to their unholy lust for power. But one of the bishops, Leonard Bouwens, who, according to our author, surpassed the others in inordinate ambition, was silenced for a number of years by the church at Emden where he resided, and was refused permission by the same church to move to another place. Evidently such facts as these were not sufficiently taken into consideration by our author when he made the above charge, that the ministers had made themselves kings.

Was Menno Simons' Party Inferior to the Others?

Professor Kuehler says that Menno Simons at the time of his death was recognized as a leader in only one of the Anabaptist parties of the Netherlands, "and this party was positively not the noblest and best"(330). This statement necessitates an inquiry into the question of the Anabaptist parties in the Netherlands at the time of Menno's death. We shall first give attention to a division involving all Mennonites of the Netherlands, except the Waterlandians, which took place in 1567, or about six years after Menno Simons' death: the schism between the Flemish (Flandrian) and Friesian congregations. In Flanders the persecution was far more severe than in the northern provinces of the Netherlands. Great numbers of Flemish Mennonite refugees settled in the northern provinces and organized themselves as congregations. The native Mennonite churches in the northern provinces were most numerous in Friesland and were therefore called Friesians. The schism between the Flemish and Friesian churches, which as just stated occurred shortly after Menno's death, was the more deplorable as the cause was not differences in faith and essential practice but on minor points. The trouble started through regrettable misunderstanding on the part of a few influential men. To all appearance the division must be ascribed to incompetent leadership.

Only a few years before this separation took place Dirk Philips (who lived near Danzig in Germany) visited the churches in the Netherlands and found conditions most encouraging. After his return home he wrote in a letter to the congregations in the Netherlands:

> While I was with you, I had great joy and my soul was refreshed in the Lord when I saw your fervency and steadfastness in the faith, your love to God and His truth, your Christ-like peace, your brotherly unity and the good rules of order observed among you, and that God's Word is so fruitful and so many are added to the church of the Lord.[45]

After this division, as well as before it had taken place, both the Friesians and the Flemish churches strictly adhered to the principles, doctrines, and practices set forth principally in the writings of Menno Simons and Dirk Philips. Both groups were strict Mennonites as is clearly indicated by their confessions of faith and by the writings of their leaders. However, within a few scores of years Menno's views on the Incarnation and marital avoidance were considered inessential by the great majority of the Flemish and Friesian churches. Professor Kuehler's statement that Menno at the time of his death was recognized as leader in only one of the Anabaptist parties of the Netherlands is true but this party consisted of the united Friesians and Flemish congregations. At that time perfect unity prevailed between the Friesian and Flemish Mennonites, as is shown by the above quotation from Dirk Philips and other evidences. Besides them there were the Waterlanders, the followers of Adam Pastor, of David Joris and of Hendrik Niclaes. The Waterlanders of that period called themselves Mennonites while later they preferred the name *Doopsgezinden.* Compared with the united Friesians and Flemish, the Waterlanders constituted at the time of Menno's death a very small minority. Concerning the Pastorites we have indicated above the impossibility of showing with any degree of conclusiveness that they ever had an organized congregation anywhere. The followers of David Joris and Hendrik Niclaes also, constituting two of the "corrupt sects," were at the time of Menno's death very weak numerically. And they were not Anabaptists in any sense. The united Friesian and Flemish Mennonites at the time of Menno's death comprised the vast majority of the Anabaptists of the Netherlands, and it was this party with which Menno Simons was identified and in which his influence surpassed that of any other leader.

In view of our author's statement that the party in which Menno Simons, at the time of his death, was recognized as a leader, "was not the noblest and best," it is in order to notice that with very few exceptions the martyrs of the Netherlands, for whom our author has unstinted praise, were of this party. This does not

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[45] *Bibl. Ref. Neerl.,* X, p. 432; Dirk Philips, *Handbook,* p. 428.

mean that the Waterlandians were inferior in devotion, consecration, or willingness to endure persecution and death—not by any means. The reason why the number of martyrs from the ranks of the Waterlandians is very much smaller is that their membership was at that time weak numerically. Far above one half of the martyrs in the Netherlands were of the Flemish Mennonites who suffered death in what is to-day Belgium, many of them at Antwerp. The rest were, with few exceptions, of the Friesian Mennonites. The fact will bear repetition, for emphasis, that at the time of Menno's death very few Waterlandians had suffered martyrdom. What our author says in praise of the Mennonite martyrs, whether their martyrdom occurred before or after Menno's death, concerns primarily the martyrs of the churches in which Menno Simons at the time of his death was recognized as the most prominent leader. What then of our author's statement that the martyrs held the same general religious position as Adam Pastor? He speaks of "the immoveable conviction of faith" manifested by the martyrs (247), and again he speaks contemptuously of those who are "blinded by the pride engendered by the belief of being God's child" (344). Is there not convincing evidence that the martyrs had the inner assurance of being right with God? Were they not aflame with certainty, having personally experienced the truth of the Christian message? Various liberalistic writers have conceded that theological liberalism makes for religious indifference, and that positive conviction and earnestness (that is to say, the qualities making for a readiness for martyrdom) are not engendered by it.

Shortly before the division between the Friesians and Flemish took place Dirk Philips was called to the Netherlands as an arbiter. His orthodoxy and talent as a writer were recognized by both groups, but he evidently lacked the tact and insight that could have prevented the threatening disruption. Our author thinks that Dirk Philips was the first to recognize a separation by his attitude toward some who did not share his point of view in regard to the prevailing difficulties (424). However, the statement of Jacques Outerman to which our author refers in support of this view does not bear out this opinion. The first part of Outerman's statement shows that Hans Sicke had previously taken such an attitude toward Dirk Philips.[46] In the controversy Philips took sides with the Flemish and after the division had become a fact, he identified himself with them. Not all Friesians and Flemish Mennonites, however, recognized an actual division.

[46] *Verclaringhe met bewijs*, p. 279.

Did the Waterlandians not Accept the Principle of Non-resistance?

Our author's assertion that the principle of nonresistance was the fruit of the supposed endeavor for "a church without spot or wrinkle" (337) is also quite unacceptable. From the very beginning the Swiss Brethren took a radical position on this point, as is perfectly clear from their teaching on the magistracy. Our author seems to assume that the Waterlanders differed from the majority of Mennonites on this point (341). But the principle of nonresistance is taught with special explicitness and emphasis in the larger Waterlandian Confession. This confession surpasses in this respect the Dortrecht Confession, since it disapproves in particular the acceptance of such civil offices as would require action inconsistent with this principle. A conference of Waterlandian Mennonites, held in 1568 at Emden, passed the following decision concerning those who had given offense by taking part in drilling for military service: "If a brother has taken part in this, he shall desist from it, confess to sorrow for the offense and ask the forgiveness of God and the congregation before he may be recognized as in peace with the church."[47] The Waterlandian congregations in Amsterdam decided in 1619 that members of the church could have no share in the ownership in ships carrying cannon (for defence against pirates). Those who transgressed this ruling, as well as those who traveled on such a ship, could not take part in the communion service. Also in trials for capital crimes no brother could serve as juror. These decisions were restated and approved by the same group of churches in 1631 and again in 1647.[48] In 1613 a member of one of the Waterlandian congregations in Amsterdam was disciplined by the church for attacking and beating two thieves who had entered his room to steal.[49]

Dr. Kuehler relates as a historical fact that toward the end of the sixteenth century the "nonresistant" Mennonites of Middelburg had workshops making weapons of war (341). The preachers of the state church in that city made such an accusation, and our author thinks that it can scarcely be supposed that they would risk telling an untruth in such a way (342). Nevertheless the accusation is of no weight so long as we do not know whether the guilty persons, if there were such, were factually members of the

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[47] *Doopsgezinde Bijdragen,* 1877, p. 73.

[48] Blaupot ten Cate, *Doopsgezinden in Holland,* I, p. 158; Dyserinck, in *De Gids,* I, 136 f.; Horsch, *The Principle of Nonresistance as held by the Mennonite Church,* p. 32.

Mennonite Church, and who the "Doopsgezinden" (Anabaptists) were who are supposed to have defended those who erred in this way. The citation given by our author is inadequate for evidence.

Did the Practice of Avoidance Involve lack of Christian Kindness and Courtesy?

Among the strictest Mennonites (with whom Menno Simons was identified) says Dr. Kuehler, referring to the latter period of Menno Simons' life, "not only exchanging daily courtesies with those expelled from the church but also assistance in the extremest need was forbidden" (305). We shall let Menno Simons speak on these points. He wrote in the period referred to:

> Kindness, modesty, geniality, courtesy, politeness toward all men becomes all Christians. If then an expelled person should meet and greet me in the common fashion with Good morning, or Good day, and I be silent; if he should show respect and I turn my face away and I in short bear myself austere and unfriendly toward him, I should certainly have reason to be ashamed of my conduct, as Sirach says. For how can such an one by such discourteous sourness be moved to repentance, smitten in conscience, and prevailed over to make amendment? For discipline is not to be used for destruction but for betterment.[50]

> The ban is a work of true Christian love, and not a preverse, unmerciful, heathenish cruelty. And a true Christian will be in every way to the extent of his ability obliging, friendly, ready to give aid, merciful toward all, even his most bitter enemies. Discourtesy, cruelty, and unmercifulness a Christian hates from his whole heart. His nature is like that of the Father of whom he is born. — Therefore we desire in all love, reasonableness and humility to serve the expelled with our temporal goods for their bodily need and with the spiritual treasures of the holy Word for in their spiritual need. — Such unmerciful and cruel teaching and practice [to refuse the expelled aid in case of need] I hate with all my heart. Nor do I desire to be considered a brother among so unmerciful, cruel brethren, if there yet be any such, unless they desist from such abomination and with all discretion follow love and mercy according to the example of God and Christ. For my heart cannot consent to such an unmerciful practice which far exceeds the cruelty of the common heathen and Turks.[51]

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49 *De Gids,* I, p. 145.

50 *Opera,* p. 475 a; *Sommarie,* 1646, p. 897 a; *Complete Works,* II, p. 277 b.

51 *Opera,* p. 475 b; *Sommarie,* p. 898 f; *Complete Works,* II, p. 278 b.

What about Mennonite Lies?

What our author says (344f) about *Menniste leugen* (Mennonite lies) constitutes in reality a serious accusation against the Mennonite Church of former centuries. As is doubtless generally known, the early Mennonites refused to take oath, insisting that Christ has forbidden the oath, and that the yea and nay of His followers (unless they be His followers in name only) are as good as their oath. Our author holds that the strict rejection of the oath by the Mennonites dates only from the time when, according to his supposition, the principle of a church without spot or wrinkle was accepted.

Our author holds the view that the (supposed) Mennonite deceptiveness was caused by the stress laid by the church on the need of truthfulness. Because of the insistence of the church on speaking the truth, he thinks, members of the church avoided open falsehoods but fell into the custom of using language that was not a positive lie and yet was calculated to deceive. He states that a martyr, Matthew Servaes,[52] sounded a warning against this sort of deception. Our author seems to be of the opinion that such a warning is rather an indication of guilt in this respect, on the part of some members of the church. Servaes, in the place indicated, gives in a general admonition the following example. If a believing husband had an unbelieving wife who would give birth to a child, and the wife would desire to have the child made a member of the established church by baptism, the husband would of course tell her that he could not consent. But if, in order not to be compelled to flee for his life, he would fail to prevail upon his wife to concur with his desires in the matter, and would let her proceed without serious objection, thinking that if the brethren asked him about it, he could say that the matter in question had been done by his wife without his consent; this would, says Servaes, not be "a right, sincere answer." And yet the husband would not say an untruth by stating that his wife acted in the matter without his consent. This example, so far from furnishing even indirectly some sort of an excuse for speaking of "Mennonite lies," is rather an indication of conscientiousness as to being truthful. And would not the Calvinists and Lutherans have protested against the obvious implication that they were less insistent on telling the truth than the Mennonites?

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[52] Van Braght, *Het Bloedig Tooneel*, II, p. 336 a; *Martyrs' Mirror*, p. 668 b.

In connection with his statements about "Mennonite lies" our author says: "Ambiguity in language was naturally not the only characteristic of the degeneration [resulting from the supposed endeavor to constitute a church without spot or wrinkle]"(345). He thinks that the accusation of some of their opponents, that they gave themselves a fine Christian appearance while their "inner man" was corrupt, was not wholly unfounded, especially after the above mentioned supposed degeneration had set in—as if these accusers were in a position to "try hearts and reins." Our author concedes that the generalizing, biased accusations of their opponents are untrustworthy, "rather I would refer," he says, "to an actual occurrence which presumably was nothing out of the ordinary." He then repeats a story told by Charles de Nielles—a fierce opponent of the Mennonites—of an Anabaptist girl whose life did not correspond with her Christian profession. It is not clear that this girl was a member of any Anabaptist church; our author in fact intimates that in his opinion she was not a Mennonite. As an evidence for the supposed Mennonite untruthfulness and hypocrisy the story therefore has no value whatever. Even if every word of it were true—a supposition that is extremely doubtful—and assuming further that the girl was a Mennonite, the story would only prove the fact that hypocrites are sometimes found in the church.

This accusation has no support except in some general statements made by a few writers from the ranks of the opponents and persecutors of the early Mennonites. These writers failed to say who the liars were or where they could be found. They were openly hostile toward the Mennonites and brought other accusations against them which were clearly without foundation. They do not point out any particular instance of telling a falsehood. On the other hand, many of the opponents of the early Mennonites who wrote about them testified that in life and outward conduct they were above reproach, though in the opinion of most of these writers, their piety was hypocrisy. Pages could be filled with testimonies of their opponents and persecutors as to their piety of life. Unless it can be shown that the Mennonites were less truthful than other Christian professors—and this is quite out of the question—one could with as much right speak of Calvinist lies, or Lutheran lies, as of Mennonite lies. Or one could speak of Mennonite drunkenness, since church members have been taken to task for this transgression. Clearly, such accusations are based on unwarranted, unreasonable generalizations.

Miscellany

Dr. Kuehler accepts the view that the "churches of the upper countries," or High Germans (Swiss Brethren) were, in 1559, excommunicated by Menno and the Mennonite leaders of the lower countries(328). This assertion was first made by a fiercely antagonistic anonymous writer in a booklet entitled *Babel of the Anabaptists, in* 1603.[53] Karl Vos and other writers have assumed that Menno's *Reply to Sielis and Lemcke*[54] was his "letter of excommunication" against the Swiss Brethren, and have therefore given the date when Menno finished this booklet (January 23, 1559) as the day when he took such action—a clearly erroneous view. During Menno Simons' life the Swiss Brethren were a denomination distinct from the Mennonites of the lower countries. The absurdity of the idea that Menno and his collaborators would undertake the expulsion of a religious body which had never been united with them is apparent. The Waterlandian churches were organically united with the Mennonite churches of the lower countries, but when they withdrew, there was no thought of excommunication on either side. And the Swiss Brethren closely approached the position of the Waterlandians.

The amusing statement by our author that Jan van Ophoorn, minister of a congregation of Flemish Mennonites at Emden, "excommunicated all and everybody," except his wife(433) is made by our author on the authority of Carel van Ghent.[55] However, the last named writer merely says that van Ophoorn believed all Flemish ministers and churches to have departed from the true foundation; he does not say that he expelled everybody. Men with ideas similar to those of Jan van Ophoorn have risen among the Mennonites of America. None took so absurd a measure as to excommunicate everybody.

The Mennonites, like the Baptists and other English dissenters, disapproved of a salaried ministry. Our author gives a quotation from Menno Simons in which he in the severest terms condemns the acceptance of salaries by the ministers of the state churches (297). For the full understanding of this passage it is necessary to read the context. In the paragraph preceding the part quoted by our author Menno pointed out that these benefices and salaries represented in a great measure the incomes from capital

[53] *Bibl. Ref. Neerl.,* VIII, pp. 15-87.

[54] *Opera,* pp. 479-490; *Complete Works,* II, pp. 283-295.

which had been obtained while the church was yet Roman Catholic, in ways and for purposes which from the evangelical point of view could not be approved. In the great disputation held at Zofingen, in 1532, the Swiss Brethren condemned the practice of the Zwinglian state churches to use the income from such benefices for the salaries of the ministers. The Brethren said that many a one had given this money for masses to save his soul; they urged that it should be returned to those who gave it, or to their rightful heirs. Menno Simons refers to such money as "antichrist's dishonestly obtained benefices". This accounts for his severity in the passage quoted, yet it is, as a matter of course, a fact that he disapproved of stipulated salaries for ministers. However, he favored adequate support for the ministers of the Word.

In our author's opinion definite regulations, or restrictions, in regard to conduct, dress, etc., were unknown among the early Anabaptists (343). However, the chronicler Johannes Kessler, of St. Gall, relates of the first Anabaptists, in the year 1525, that they led very strict lives and their attire was plain and simple. Heinrich Bullinger said, in 1531, that they did not permit dancing and other popular pleasures. Sebastan Franck wrote in the same year that there were Anabaptists who made regulations about attire. With obvious exaggeration Franck said that they had a ruling "how many pleats the apron must have, etc." Bullinger, in his larger work, says that they avoided the drinking houses and places of amusement. In a mandate against the Brethren in the canton Bern it was stated that they are readily known as such at first sight. Menno Simons, in his earliest as well as his later books, wrote against ostentation in dress.

Our author thinks that, as concerns the use of abusive language, Menno Simons exceeded the general usage even in sixteenth century polemical writings (310). Menno's writings, however, are singularly free of personally abusive epithets. If the writings of Luther, the most prominent of the reformers, are in any sense a criterion for sixteenth century usage, a censure of Menno on this count is out of question. Compare for example Luther's book *Wider Hans Worst*[56] with Menno's polemical writings. The leading reformers of the state church type of Protestantism, Luther, Zwingli, and Calvin, referred to the Brethren in almost unbelievably abusive terms. Never did Menno become guilty of using such

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56 *Luthers Werke,* Erlangen, *XXVI,* pp. 2-75.

epithets even relative to the corrupt sects whose positions he denounced most severely.

It is impossible, says our author (331), that the Dutch Mennonites of to-day should "honor Menno as the spiritual father of the religious position which they hold; their relationship with him is not direct." The question is pertinent, Can any Mennonite or Anabaptist leader or party of the sixteenth century be named with whom the present-day Dutch Mennonites sustain a more direct relationship than with Menno? Certainly not with Melchior Hofman or Adam Pastor. The points of differentiation between the Friesians and Flemish on the one hand and the Waterlandians on the other were of very minor importance. The Mennonites of the Netherlands were quite well united in doctrine and principle at the time when modern religious views found their way into the brotherhood two generations ago. In an article dealing with the Mennonite World Convention held in Basel in 1925, Ds. C. Nijdam, of Amsterdam, said that through the influence of the seminary in Amsterdam the majority of the Mennonites of the Netherlands became *modern godsdienstig* (modernistic) and, as Dr. Kuehler has stated in an article in *Doopsgezinde Bijdragen,* this change of position took place gradually after the middle of the nineteenth century. "At the present time, in the twentieth century," says our author, "the vast majority of the brotherhood in the Netherlands feels itself spiritually most closely related to exactly those parties whose positions showed the greatest differences from that of Menno" (331). It is not clear which parties our author has in mind. We have made mention elsewhere of the various contemporary Anabaptist parties in the Netherlands.

In conclusion the writer feels impelled to ask forbearance for failing to take the time and space to point out the features of the book which are above criticism. However, many readers will agree that the book deserves attention principally because of its attempt to seek an historical Anabaptist parentage for the advanced theological liberalism of the majority of the Netherlandic Mennonites of to-day, and because it presents a new and very unfavorable picture of Mennonitism as represented by Menno Simons and the vast majority of the Mennonites of his time.